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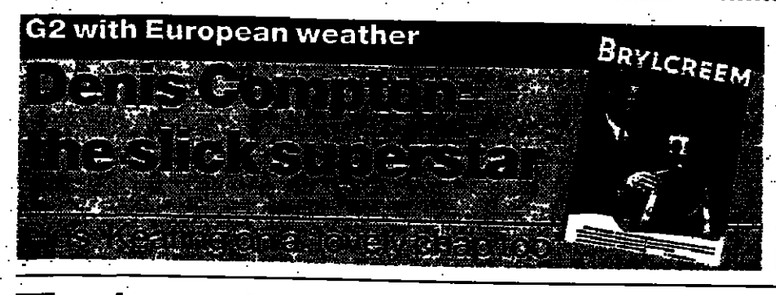

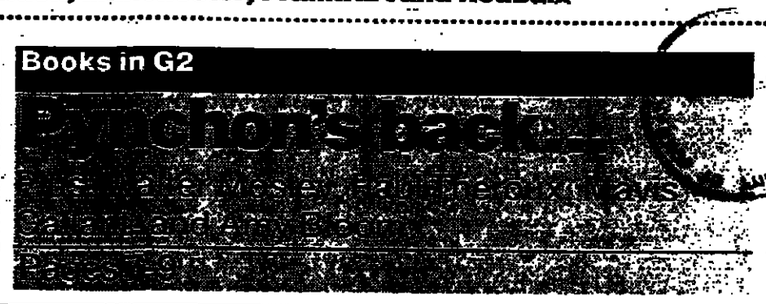

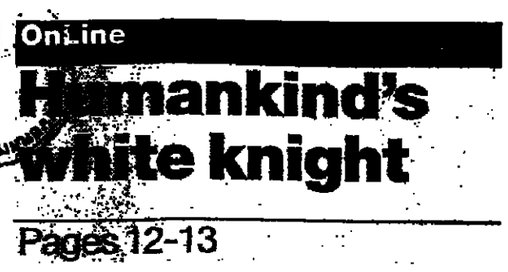

Tories claim leak exposes cynicism of Blair ☐ New polls steady Labour

Battle of the War Book

Michael White
Political Editor

THE Conservatives last night risked giving Tony Blair "free advertising" when they published a leaked version of Labour's election War Book in a calculated attempt to prove their rivals sinister, cynical and manipulative.

The Tory chairman, Brian Mawhinney, claimed that the 30-page document, in his possession for six months, admits to Labour's weaknesses as well as Mr Blair's and sets out systematic plans to hit the voters with scare stories on VAT and doctors' bills as election day approaches.

Labour dismissed what amounted to an involuntary tribute to intense advance planning as "free advertising" designed to distract attention from Mr Blair's announcement that £1 billion worth of National Lottery revenue will be switched to new initiatives to boost health and education if he wins power.

With Labour hammering the Conservative threat to increase VAT and cut social service provision, the exchanges were proof that — with seven days to go — the gloves have come off in the wake of this week's Guardian/ICM poll. The poll showed that John Major may have closed the gap to a 42:37:14 per cent Labour lead, enough to give Tory candidates revived hope of a late win.

Last night two new polls bolstered Labour's claims that ICM's findings, that the gap had closed from 14 to 5 points in a week, were a rogue poll that did not reflect a barely dented lead. Gallup's poll for Channel 4 News reported a 50:31:13 per cent Labour lead — down just 4 points in two weeks — though up to 50 per cent of voters may yet change their minds. Mori's poll gave Labour a 21 point lead, with the Tories on 27 per cent.

Mr Major and Mr Blair ritually made light of the poll results but Dr Mawhinney led Tory claims that ICM's private findings for them were consistent with its public work for the Guardian.

All the same, Mr Blair plans to reinforce that claim by invoking the "nightmare" voters would endure if they woke up on May 2 to find the Tories in power for a fifth term. In a fresh squeeze on the Liberal Democrats he will also warn voters against "wasting their votes" on a third party, and thus risking a Tory victory by accident.

For their part Tory strategists backed off claims that any improvement in their poll share is only attributable to brute Euroscepticism. Part of the credit must go to cheerier voter perception of the economy — and the fear that Labour might spoil it — plus the "trust" issue.

Sources in the Blair camp were undismayed by the ICM poll. "It will be worth it if it focuses people's minds on the fact that, if they don't vote Labour, they will get those bastards again," said one.

Dr Mawhinney's leak of the Labour War Book — its authenticity not denied last night — came in the form of a letter to candidates. The War Book assesses both sides' strengths and weaknesses, much of it highly damaging to the Tories as well as blunt about Labour weak spots.

Dr Mawhinney's letter claimed that, contrary to Labour's plans, "doorstep discussion" in the campaign is now focused on its weaknesses. He also accused Labour of being afraid of Mr Major's reputation — "Tony Blair just lusts for power" — and said it showed the Labour leader "lacks appeal to women", especially younger ones, nervous about change and inclined to think Mr Major "honest and decent". The War Book actually calls him weak and indecisive and stresses Mr Blair's strengths: "young, strong, dynamic".

Potentially the most damaging charge for a party which has stressed its positive approach to campaigning is, says Dr Mawhinney: "Months before the manifesto was written, they decided on their smear and scare tactics. They cynically decided to scare people about VAT on food and other items." Ironically this could provide Labour with the very "free advertising" it claims. Even before the leak, Gordon Brown and his Treasury junior, Dawn Primarolo, issued a fresh challenge to ministers to come clean on Kenneth Clarke's much-repeated lament that "we exempt far too many goods and services from VAT".

The purpose was to remind voters how much Conservatives misled them on tax, especially VAT, in 1992 and that Labour is committed to lower VAT on domestic fuel to 5 per cent — and not to extend it to food, books, children's clothing or public transport.

John Major in Inverness yesterday. The Prime Minister spent St George's Day in Scotland and claimed that devolution would be a 'disaster' for Britain PHOTOGRAPH: MURDO MACLEOD

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Oxford college votes to remain women only

Sarah Boseley

AN ATTEMPT to storm the last all-female bastion of Oxford University was beaten off last night, when the governing body of St Hilda's College voted by a narrow margin not to admit male fellows.

Students at the college, where Education and Employment Secretary Gillian Shephard and newsreader Zeinab Badawi studied, overwhelmingly opposed the change, fearful that it was a step towards the admission of male undergraduates. Yesterday, they were overjoyed.

"We are all delighted but surprised because we were not expecting it to go this way," said Tasmin Lishman, president of the Junior Common Room. "St Hilda's is the only college in Oxford that promotes women on an equal footing with men. The college acts as a positive role model and a way for women to show they can get on in academia."

The governing body needs a two-thirds majority to change the college statutes to let men in as fellows. The vote was 17 in favour, but 10 against.

Elizabeth Llewellyn-Smith, the principal, said: "What it shows is that there is a slight body of opinion against the change as well as a slight majority in favour of it, which is obviously not a very comfortable situation. It is not the happiest situation, but I don't regard it as apocalyptic."

But the decision leaves St Hilda's problems unsolved. The general shortage of female academics in the sciences is acute at the college: it should have three chemistry fellows, but has none, and two in physics, but has just one. Its only fellow in biochemistry is leaving at the end of the year.

Dons hold dual posts, one funded by the college and one by the university, but while the college is exempted from the sex discrimination legislation, the university is not and must appoint the best candidate, man or woman. St Hilda's has been able to fund some posts on its own, through private donations, but the costs are prohibitive. Ms Llewellyn-Smith said it had no choice but to continue farming out undergraduates to tutors at other colleges.

"There is nothing terribly dramatic on the horizon, like giving up chemistry and so on," she said, but sending students outside the college was not satisfactory. Students who did not have their subject tutor in their college were losing out, she said.

St Hilda's undergraduates, nonetheless, want the peaceful college on the river beyond Magdalen Bridge to stay as it is. "There is an incredibly supportive atmosphere. People say it is like coming home. They don't feel intimidated or threatened. They say they can be themselves," said Ms Lishman.

For now, their sanctuary is reprieved, but not forever. "It is very likely to come up again," said the principal.

'Cablinasian' Tiger Woods sparks multi-racial debate

Alex Duval Smith
in Washington

TIGER WOODS, described as the "first black in a green jacket" after he won the United States Masters golf tournament, yesterday ignited a complex debate over multi-racial definitions by stating that he is "Cablinasian".

As Congress yesterday grappled with which racial groups to list on the next US census form, the brilliant 21-year-old golfer said he was not black and did not want categories.

Woods's remarks on the Oprah Winfrey chat show prompted an immediate response from mixed-race Americans, including singer Eartha Kitt who said inter-racial marriages had rendered current definitions obsolete.

Woods, whose black father met his mother in Thailand, said he is a quarter Thai, a quarter Chinese, a quarter black, one-eighth white and one-eighth American-Indian.

Tiger Woods: unhappy with racial pigeon-holing

It was his father who last week spoke of the "black in a green jacket" — a reference to the Masters winner's blazer. But Woods was unhappy with the definition. "I'm just who I am — whoever you see in front of you. Growing up, I came up with this name — I'm a Cablinasian," he said, explaining that the word was a compound of Caucasian, black, Indian and Asian.

Kitt, usually described as half African-American and half American-Indian, said she had no race. "You cannot, in the melting pot, define races. We are all American. Those of us who have inter-racial blood should be allowed to be who we please," she told CNN.

But Congress, which yesterday began considering whether the next census, in 2000, should feature more than the current eight racial categories, will face other pressures.

Separatists such as the Nation of Islam's Louis Farrakhan, who presses for increased racial polarisation, are lobbying for an expansion of the current census choices: black, white, Hispanic, American-Indian, Alaskan native, Asian, Pacific islander and "other".

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Ferry companies win injunction

French fishing boats face big fines

Luke Harding

THE three main cross-Channel ferry companies last night served injunctions on 15 fishermen whose blockade of Calais, Boulogne and Dover threw services into a second day of chaos.

The fishermen, protesting against a European ruling over the mesh size of fishing nets, face personal fines of 10,000 francs (just over £1,000) an hour if they continue their action.

Lawyers from the ferry companies — P & O Ferries, Stena Line and Sea France which between them normally run 55 daily return trips to Calais — won the injunction in Boulogne against the fishermen yesterday afternoon.

A spokesman for P & O said: "It is now down to the fishermen as to when they lift their blockade, or whether they lift their blockade. The injunction was the only legal road down which we could have gone."

The protesters showed no sign of moving the trawlers, which are blocking the main French ports, disrupting the plans of thousands of day-trippers and holidaymakers, and delaying an estimated 5,000 lorries.

French fishing leaders yesterday signalled there was no possibility of the blockade being lifted until after a meeting with agriculture minister Philippe Vasseur in Paris this morning in which they will press for concessions from Brussels.

In an attempt to minimise the disruption, ferries from Dover were yesterday diverted to provide an emergency shuttle service to and from Zeebrugge, Belgium. Thousands of cars were diverted through the Channel Tunnel, and parts of the M20 in Kent were closed to provide a lorry park for delayed truck drivers.

More than 1,000 trucks were waiting on the motorway as police tried to prevent the port of Dover from grinding to a halt. Goods traffic is not allowed through the Channel Tunnel following last year's fire. At Zeebrugge an eight-mile queue of lorries trying to return to Britain stretched out of the port.

In London, the Freight Transport Association delivered a demand for £100 million to the French embassy yesterday following the 12-day blockade by striking French lorry drivers in November. The association is pressing for compensation for delays because of the dispute. So far no money has been forthcoming.

The main ferry terminal at Dover was almost deserted yesterday as motorists stayed away from the lorry-clogged motorways. Police were calling lorries in groups of 50 from "holding areas" set up on the closed section of the M20.

Ferry companies said lorry drivers faced waits of up to six hours and motorists two hours. The crossing to Zeebrugge takes four and a quarter hours, compared with 75 to 90 minutes to Calais.

In the queue at Calais, Harry Bridges, a removal van driver from Southend, Essex, said: "I think it's disgusting and I think most drivers agree. This dispute's got nothing to do with us, but they're holding everybody up and holding business up."

Colin Boswell, a driver from Rugby also trapped at Calais, said he had been caught in the French truckers' dispute last year and his company had still not been compensated.

"I can't see the fishermen's point. We all have to obey the same rules."

"To me, it's absolutely ridiculous because this is spoiling everybody's business and it's got nothing to do with us."

Speaking on BBC Radio 4's the World at One, the Transport Secretary, Sir George Young, said French officials had expressed regret over the disruption. He said he would pursue the issue of compensation following last year's lorry strike at a meeting with French authorities tomorrow. The Liberal Democrat transport spokesman, David Chidgey, called the Government's handling of the affair "totally ineffectual", while his Labour counterpart, Andrew Smith, claimed the unresolved dispute over compensation showed the Government's failure "to stand up for Britain's interests".

Some of the 1,000 lorries waiting their turn for a ferry on the M20 PHOTOGRAPH: MARTIN GODWIN

Rebuke for Howard over IRA lifers

David Sharrock
Ireland Correspondent

THE Home Secretary, Michael Howard, suffered a judicial rebuke yesterday when his decision that two IRA bombers should remain in jail for the rest of their lives was overturned by the High Court in Belfast.

Paul Kavanagh and Thomas Quigley, who were convicted and given life sentences at the Old Bailey in 1985 for three murders caused by IRA bombs at a burger bar and at Chelsea Barracks, were challenging Mr Howard's ruling that they must remain in jail until they die.

The trial judge, Mr Justice Cowan, recommended that the men, both from West Belfast, should each serve a minimum of 35 years. But David Waddington, then home secretary, told Parliament that he had revised their tariff upwards to 50 years, and Lord Lane, then lord chief justice, stated: "I would not release them at all."

Kavanagh and Quigley, who were transferred to Maghaberry prison, near Lisburn, Co Antrim, in 1994 as part of the Government's response to the IRA ceasefire, claimed in their applications for judicial review that Mr Howard was required to inform them of his reasons for failing to follow the view of the trial judge.

The details of the decision will be studied by the lawyers of more than 20 other life sentence prisoners, such as Myra Hindley and the police killer Harry Roberts, who have been informed in recent months by the Home Secretary that for them "life really will mean life" and they will never leave prison.

Mr Justice Kerr said in his judgment that Mr Howard's rejection of the IRA men's application relied on the assertion that the judicial view of their sentence had been expressed by Lord Lane.

"I simply cannot accept that claim. The Home Secretary is required to consult the trial judge as well as the Lord Chief Justice." To suggest that the judicial view was that the tariff should be "whole life" was to dismiss entirely the opinion of the trial judge.

Mr Justice Kerr added: "While it may be true that the Home Secretary was not strictly required to fix upon a tariff, the suggestion that he did not do so appears to me to be somewhat contrived, if not indeed disingenuous. I consider that the Home Secretary was obliged to explain why he was minded to depart from the judicial view expressed by Mr Justice McCowan and to increase the tariff beyond that which had been fixed by the former home secretary.

"I will therefore accede to the application to quash his decision fixing the tariff in each case as 'whole life'."

Quigley's solicitor, Pearse MacDermott, said after the hearing: "Mr Howard's ministerial career has sustained a further lash from the bench. We earnestly hope that when our client's tariff is reconsidered it will not be by the same home secretary."

Kavanagh's solicitor, Angela Ritchie, said: "As far as we know this is the first case where a whole life tariff set by a home secretary has been overturned."

A Home Office spokesman said: "We are considering the judgment."

Michael Howard: 'was required to give reasons'

'I consider that the Home Secretary was obliged to explain why he was minded to depart from the judicial view and to increase the tariff beyond that fixed by the former home secretary'

Boy of 9 expelled over drug

Father complains that police have not analysed substance

John Carvel
Education Editor

A NINE-year-old boy has been expelled from his north London primary school for alleged possession of cannabis on school premises.

He said he found the drug on the kitchen breadboard at home, but this was denied by his father, who said the police had not even checked if the suspect material was an illegal substance.

The governors of Whitings Hill primary in Barnet were meeting last night to discuss the case. A spokesman for the local education authority said it was the first time such a young pupil had been expelled for having drugs.

The school did not have a drug problem and no other children were implicated.

The authority said the boy was suspended after he was found with the cannabis on March 21. He was permanently expelled at the start of the summer term this month.

A Scotland Yard spokesman said: "The substance was recovered by local officers and the matter has been referred to our youth and community section. The substance is likely to be analysed by our forensic department, depending on the conclusion of the local inquiry."

Anne Jarvis, chairwoman of the council's education committee, said the head teacher had the right to exclude the child. "The governing body then meets to decide whether to endorse her decision. If they do endorse it, the child's parents have the right to appeal against their decision."

The boy's parents complained that they were not present when teachers called in the police to interview their son. He is being kept at home and given schoolwork by welfare officers.

Heart surgeon 'not negligent'

No duty to warn parents of son's brain damage risk in operation

Clare Dyer
Legal Correspondent

THE transplant team headed by the heart surgeon Sir Magdi Yacoub was yesterday cleared of negligence in failing to warn parents that their baby son could be left severely brain-damaged by a heart transplant operation.

Kevin and Linda Poynter, of Biggleswade, Bedfordshire, claimed that had they known of the risk they would have refused consent for the transplant at Harefield hospital, west London, and allowed Matthew, then aged 16 months, to die in peace.

On behalf of their son, now aged 10, they sued Hillingdon health authority for compensation. But Sir Maurice Drake ruled at the High Court that Professor Yacoub and the cardiologist Rosemary Radley-Smith had no duty to warn them of a risk which was less than 1 per cent, when they had asked no questions about brain damage.

In December 1987, when the operation was performed, a responsible body of medical opinion would not have warned of such a small risk, Sir Maurice held. Therefore the doctors could not have been negligent.

Matthew, whose injuries occurred when he suffered a cardiac arrest during anaesthesia, was the only child to sustain brain damage among the 177 who have received new hearts at Harefield. He will need lifelong nursing.

The judge also rejected the parents' evidence that they would not have gone ahead with the operation had they known of the risk. This finding means they would have lost even if the doctors had been found negligent.

The family's solicitor, Tom Osborne, said Mr Poynter and his wife did not want to speak about the case yesterday. But they said in a statement: "We still cannot understand why it has taken almost 10 years for Prof Yacoub and Dr Radley-Smith to give an explanation.

"From a very early stage we were wanting to seek alternative methods to resolve the dispute over Matthew's treatment and care, but all such approaches were ignored or rejected ... The amount of money spent in bringing this matter to court ... would have been more than sufficient to provide care for Matthew and probably many other children in a similar situation."

Mr Osborne estimated the legal costs for both sides at more than £250,000.

A suite for another mysterious hotel room

Review

Judith Mackrell

Second Stride
The Place

SECOND Stride's new work, Hotel, may be getting its London première in a dance season at The Place, but the company has long ceased to advertise itself as a dance group.

With each new show the group's balance shifts, so that what it presents may variously look like choreography with words, a play with music or some kind of operatic art installation with steps. This latest piece is directed by choreographer Ian Spink, yet since there are only two dancers alongside its 13 singers and three musicians it hardly counts as dance. Its words are by Caryl Churchill, which, given the current focus of interest in her plays makes it a theatre event. Yet Churchill's spikily fragmented text is so closely tied to Orlando Gough's densely rhythmic score that you often hear her words as pure sound.

So it is not play nor opera nor dance. But it's easy to see why Spink would want to cram so much different art into his work, for his subject is the weird range of humanity that passes through the anonymous space of a hotel bedroom. Or rather eight hotel bedrooms, because the stage is filled with six couples, one man and one woman, who are all apparently spending the night in different rooms.

Deftly orchestrated by Spink, they mill past each other, doing the things people always do in hotels such as checking their teeth in the mirror, switching on the telly and flaking on the bed. Gough and Churchill give them private songs to sing — ditties, arias, jazz tunes — which reflect their various concerns, and the stage atmosphere conjures the sense of air breathed by too many others, which defines a hotel room.

Churchill's text makes slightly wolfish humour at the expense of its cast of lovers, tourists and business people. Yet as their voices mingle and soar, the trivality of their individual moments combines to become something tender and humane. When the lovers sing their passion, and the sleepers blurt out their dreams and fears, the work begins to resonate under the pressure of real emotion.

The second half, however, moves away from the small and specific into the realm of the psychotic and the strange. The singers form a chorus, shuffling anxiously in and out of the wings, as if spying on the two dancers who now take centre stage. This couple appear to be a suicidal man and a murderous woman who move with a furious driven energy as Churchill's lyrics speak elliptically of people disappearing. Gough's music largely abandons its bright contrasts for a more static, oppressive sound and we sense the work trying to grasp for something fearful and dark.

Disappointingly, though, we are given too little hard information as to what this may be and the images offered are neither specific nor compelling enough to make our imaginations work. After the wonderful vigour of the first half the piece ends not with mystery but a feeling of arbitrariness.

This review appeared in later editions yesterday

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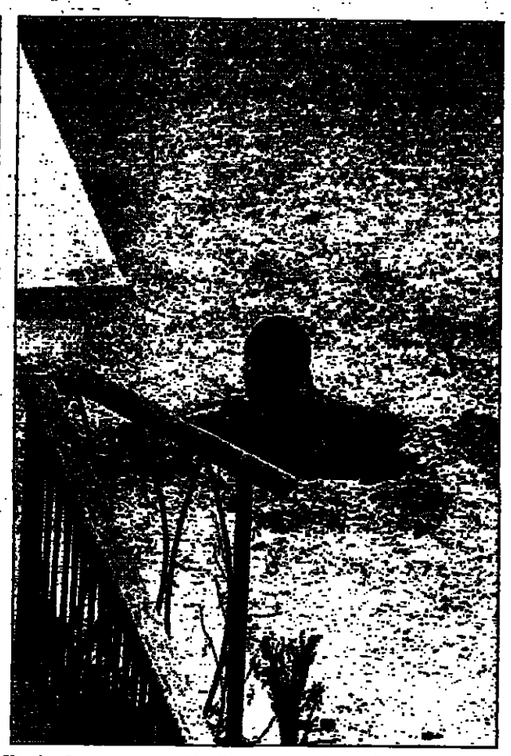
END OF THE SIEGE . . . Fujimori takes sole responsibility for daring attack amid reports that younger rebels attempted to surrender



Former Peruvian minister Dante Cordova hugs relatives after his release; a Peruvian soldier in the grounds of the Japanese ambassador's residence; freed hostage Moises Pantoja arrives at hospital PHOTOGRAPHS: PEDRO CARDENAS, FERNANDO LLANO

How Peru leader gambled and won

Jane Díaz-Límaco in Lima reports on the meticulous plans behind the rescue operation, and the feelings of the hostages as the explosions began

AS LIMA breathed a heart-felt sigh of relief that the longest hostage siege in Latin America's history was finally over, Peru's President Alberto Fujimori took sole responsibility for ordering the daring military strike on the Japanese ambassador's residence.

Speaking early yesterday, Mr Fujimori said: "I had to take such a difficult decision ... alone, but conscious that in Peru there could not be a place for terrorism."

He did not warn Tokyo of the planned attack on the Japanese diplomatic compound, arguing that he could not risk the element of surprise that was the key to the attack's success. The hostages, however, did get 10 minutes' notice via a secret communication channel.

Peruvian newspapers hailed the success of the operation which ended the 126-day siege, while most foreign governments, including Tokyo, congratulated Mr Fujimori on the result that left just one of 72 hostages dead — overlooking reports that some of the rebels tried to surrender. They put aside for the moment deeper consideration of the huge gamble the Peruvian leader took.

Apart from putting at risk the lives of all inside, including his own brother, Pedro, in the attack, the president broke a pledge to Japan not to intervene unless a hostage was harmed.

In the end the crisis turned on a battle of wills between Mr Fujimori and the captors' leader, Néstor Cerpa.

Cerpa's mother, Felicita Cartolini, who lives in France, said she was proud of her son and wanted to go to Peru to bury him.

In Lima, there were warm congratulations for the elite commando force of 140 soldiers whose operation to free the hostages used an armoury of dynamite, grenades, paralysing gas and a three-pronged tunnel.

Only the family of the hostage who died — of a heart attack after being wounded — sounded a more melancholy note. "A lot of time had passed and a decision had to be made, but I don't know ..." said Orlinda La Torre, sister-in-law of the victim, judge Carlos Giusti.

Freed hostages revealed that they had received prior warning that the attack was imminent. One, retired navy admiral Luis Giampetri Rojas, had a hidden radio transmitter and was reportedly responsible for letting the special troops know the exact moment the Tupac Amaru rebels began a daily game of football in a downstairs room.

The Bolivian ambassador, Jorge Gumucio, who was among the hostages, said eight rebels, including Cerpa, were playing football when the first explosion in a tunnel under their feet ripped through the residence, killing or badly wounding the players.

Jesuit priest Juan Julio Wicht, another hostage, said that when a fellow hostage told him that he was about to be freed, he "felt it was a joke". But moments later, he said, "there was an explosion from deep below the residence and all the house vibrated. There was a huge explosion and we all threw ourselves on the floor."

The Japanese ambassador, Morihisa Aoki, the host of the December party that was attacked by Tupac Amaru, gave a press conference late on Tuesday, sitting in a wheelchair. Looking pale and drawn, Mr Aoki said that when he heard the first explosions, "The first thing that came into my head was ... now my life will end."

Lima's newspapers unpicked details of how the attack was planned.

Peruvian security experts said the attack hinged on meticulous intelligence investigations and sheer determination. Preparations for the raid began two weeks after the residence was taken, with the formation of an elite commando unit.

CNN showed footage of the training with troops staging mock attacks on full-size plywood models of the residence's floors, complete with drawings of rebels.

The daily La República reported that highly sophisticated information from a spy plane, apparently loaned by the United States, meant the troops knew exactly where the rebels had stacked their arsenals. US officials reportedly helped with the design of tunnels into the residence.

The newspaper said that a team of miners from the central Andes was brought in to dig a tunnel with three exits under the grounds of the residence. Microphones inside the tunnels allowed agents to monitor conversations.

Expreso reported that the lower-ranking rebels, mostly teenagers, were becoming discontented and pressing to return home, but Mr Gumucio said that the rebel lieutenants forced Cerpa to maintain his tough stance.

The central demand throughout the crisis was for the release of more than 400 jailed rebel comrades.

The ambassador said a rebel known as Tito told him: "I didn't leave my fields and my family to go to Cuba with the release of only three rebels. I'm here for the whole 400." He was referring to a government offer of safe passage to Cuba.

A rebel who was in radio contact with the captors told Reuters news agency that the four youngest Tupac Amaru members tried to surrender before being killed. "They were in a room on their own. They gave up out of fear."

The troops, though, had orders to kill.

First designed as ducts to send paralysing gas into the residence, the tunnels were used by troops to file into the residence amid explosions.

Another group of officers came into the first floor, where the hostages were gathered, and guided them out over the roof as the gun battle, which lasted nearly half an hour, continued.

The hostages said that a great feeling of unity among those living in different rooms had helped them survive their ordeal.

Mr Gumucio said: "We did gym together, we read the same books, we played the same games," in the Japanese ambassador's bedroom, where the diplomats were held. He said they also had a kind of social life. "We would visit the judges, or they would invite us for lunch and sometimes we [the diplomats] were invited by the police."

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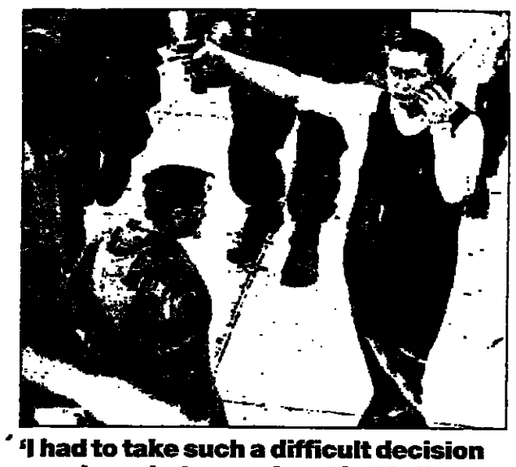

'I had to take such a difficult decision . . . alone, but conscious that in Peru there could not be a place for terrorism' — Alberto Fujimori, above

After the first explosions, 'the first thing that came into my head was, now my life will end' — Japanese ambassador Morihisa Aoki, above

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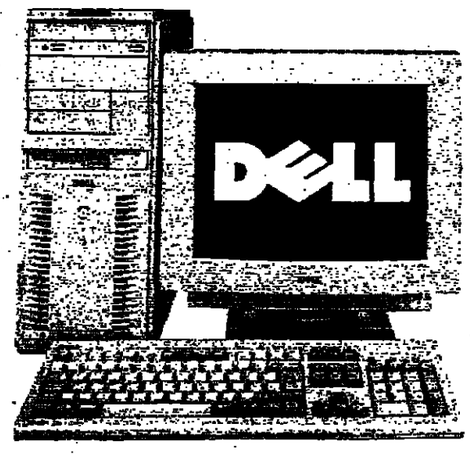

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News in brief

Child sex abuse drama 'valid'

COMPLAINTS about a harrowing ITV drama documentary about a real-life case of child abuse were rejected by the Independent Television Commission yesterday. It had received 54 complaints about Meridian's No Child of Mine from viewers who said scenes were too graphic for broadcast.

They were concerned about the actress who played the central role of Kerry. The commission said scenes implying sexual acts involving the central child character did not contain graphic detail and that Meridian had been sensitive to the treatment of the child actress. Doubts about the validity of the story had been expressed by the director of social services in the area in which Kerry lived, but the commission accepted assurances from the that the film was entirely based on fact, much of it from confidential files made available by the real-life Kerry. — *Andrew Culf*

Elderly short-changed

ELDERLY people in state-funded care homes are left with barely a third of what they need to pay for personal needs such as clothes and toiletries, a study by the family budget unit at King's College, London, today suggests.

The personal expenses allowance of £14.10 a week compares with £38.78 needed to meet the "modest but adequate" outgoings of someone living in a residential home, according to the research for the charity Age Concern.

The charity is calling on the incoming government to review the "derisory" allowance paid to more than 250,000 home residents whose fees are met by income support or their local authority. — *David Brindle*

Murdered girl's funeral

DEBBIE Woods, the natural mother of Billie-Jo Jenkins, fled from her daughter's funeral in tears yesterday when the murdered teenager's foster mother arrived uninvited at the City of London Cemetery chapel.

Ms Woods had asked that neither foster mother Lois Jenkins, nor her foster father, Simon, who has been charged with her murder, should be there. But Mrs Jenkins and her four daughters were among the 300 mourners who paid tribute to the 13-year-old, who was bludgeoned to death in Hastings, East Sussex.

Hitmen jailed for life

TWO contract killers were jailed for life yesterday for the cold-blooded execution of accountant David Wilson. A jury of seven men and five women at Liverpool crown court took just over eight hours to find Michael Crossley, 34, guilty of murdering 47-year-old Wilson on March 5, 1992 at his home near Chorley, Lancashire. They also found him guilty of the unlawful imprisonment of Wilson's daughter, Michelle.

Stephen Playle, also 34, was found guilty of murder on Tuesday.

Judge Mr Justice Mantell jailed Playle, of Sidcup, Kent, and Crossley of Northfleet, Kent, for life for the murder. He also jailed them for seven years for unlawful imprisonment.

UK explosive supply at risk

BRITAIN'S only source of key military explosives may be closed in a deal between Royal Ordnance and the French firm SNPE. The two manufacturers are discussing a merger designed to eliminate excess European capacity in explosives. This is expected to mean closing the Royal Ordnance factory at Bridgwater, Somerset, the only plant in this country making HMX, RDX and military TNT explosives. The news prompted protests from trade unions and from David Clark, Labour's defence spokesman. — *David Fairhall*

Volvos top for security

VOLVOS are the most secure vehicles, according to a study out yesterday of cars in Britain from insurers Eagle Star Direct. They are least likely to be broken into and stolen. Next are Nissans, followed by Jaguars, Renaults, Mercedes and Fords.

THE Fairground Heritage Trust is fighting to save a unique collection, which includes some of the oldest surviving Victorian and Edwardian fairground rides, *writes Maev Kennedy.*

Overseas buyers, particularly in the US and Switzerland, are vying with interior decorators for such material. The trust has warned that if negotiations this week fail, the collection in Northampron will have to be sold, almost certainly abroad.

It includes the only surviving Bioscope Wagon, designed at the turn of the century to show moving pictures, a decade before the first cinemas. It also has rides by fairground carvers, including the 1920s statue, above, of the US comic Harold Lloyd.

PHOTOGRAPH: KIPPA MATTHEWS

Schools in crisis as heads retire

John Carvel
Education Editor

THE incoming government will face an immediate crisis in education caused by a haemorrhaging of head teachers retiring early to escape pressure of work, deteriorating health and ineffective governing bodies, the National Association of Head Teachers warned yesterday.

Thousands of heads and deputies say they will quit at the end of this term, and schools have only a few more days to find replacements to start in September.

In some London boroughs as many as a fifth of heads are retiring, and nearly half these posts are not filled when jobs are first advertised. "The problem is mirrored in other parts of the country and one of the first challenges facing the new government will be the need to stop this haemorrhage of talent," said David Hart, the association's general secretary.

"There will be a record number of acting heads running schools on a temporary basis while the governing bodies seek to find a replacement. This creates a highly unstable situation which is not conducive to raising standards."

The association released a survey of London heads showing 20 per cent of those retiring were aged between 46 and 50, with 50 per cent between 50 and 60. More than a quarter cited ill health as the reason for leaving early. Other reasons included:

☐ "Simple overall workload and burnout. Prior to that education was my whole life."

☐ "Pressures in terms of conflict between own vision/government demands, plus continual changes in the role over the past six years."

☐ "The educational environment has become increasingly joyless. Each day is a battle with standards to be maintained while staff are increasingly worn down."

According to the survey, 86 per cent of heads worked more than 51 hours a week, and 40 per cent worked more than 60. Just over half thought their governing bodies were not effective, and only 7 per cent said their governors could organise themselves efficiently.

Relations with the governors were cited most frequently as a reason for early retirement, followed by work overload, pressures of inspection by the Office for Standards in Education, deteriorating health and aggressive parents or pupils.

Gillian Shephard, the Education and Employment Secretary, tried to block the exodus of heads and teachers in December when she announced changes to the pension scheme to discourage early retirement, but was obliged to postpone them by legal threats.

This may have encouraged a rush of premature resignations among staff who think this may be the last chance to get out of the profession with an enhanced pension.

Brian Fuller, London regional officer for the NAHT, said the crisis affected secondary as well as primary schools, he said.

Briton dies in Everest attempt

Vivek Chaudhary

A LEADING British mountaineer has died from a suspected heart attack while attempting to climb Mount Everest, it was reported last night.

Malcolm Duff, aged 43, was found dead in his tent at the base camp on the Nepalese side of the mountain.

Mr Duff, a professional mountaineer who pioneered new routes in both Scotland and the Himalayas, was leading a commercial expedition, made up of seven other climbers, up the South Col route.

According to the British Mountaineering Council, Mr Duff, of Culross, Fife, had attempted to climb Everest at least five times before but had failed on each occasion.

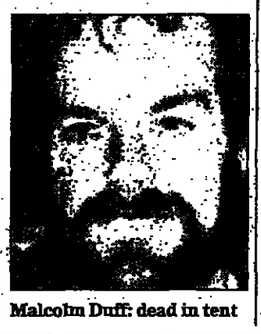
Last year, he abandoned an attempt after going missing in blizzards which claimed the lives of eight climbers.

Andy Perkins, vice-president of the council, said: "Mal's approach to mountaineering was filled with drive, enthusiasm and positive energy. His death leaves a large gap in the ranks of Britain's leading mountaineers."

Mr Duff's widow, Liz, aged 41, also a keen climber, is to travel to Nepal today to bring back her husband's body for burial. The couple, who have been married for 13 years, have no children.

Mr Duff's sister-in-law, Eunice Rennie, said yesterday that after a day of climbing, Mr Duff returned to base camp at 16,000 ft above sea level and was reported to be coughing.

Mr Duff is the 10th Briton to die on Everest expedition.



Malcolm Duff: dead in tent

Teacher college closed because of 'unacceptable standards'

Donald MacLeod
Education Correspondent

A COLLEGE'S teacher training programme has been closed because of unacceptable standards, the Teacher Training Agency announced yesterday. It is the first such closure and marks the climax of years of Conservative attacks on colleges that promote "trendy" methods.

La Sainte Union college in Southampton had significant weaknesses in management, the Office for Standards in Education found after a second inspection. The teaching competence of final year students was also questioned.

Arrangements were made for the 800 students to complete their training with Southampton university, Chichester Institute and King Alfred's college, Winchester.

La Sainte Union, a Catholic foundation, will continue as a college of Southampton university, teaching other courses and adult classes. A new centre for Catholic education is to be established on the site.

County must fund ill girl's home tuition

Clare Dyer
Legal Correspondent

THE mother of a teenager kept away from school by chronic fatigue syndrome won a High Court ruling yesterday stopping her local council cutting her daughter's home tuition.

Hilary Tandy, from Lewes, accused East Sussex county council of unlawfully putting the need for financial savings before the educational needs of her daughter, Beth, aged 15, who suffers from the condition also known as myalgic encephalomyelitis (ME) or post-viral syndrome.

Mr Justice Keene ruled the council had unlawfully taken into account "an immaterial consideration" — its own need to make cash cuts — when considering what was "suitable education" for Beth.

The ruling will affect local education authorities nationwide and children absent from school because of chronic illness, bad behaviour, or other reasons. Beth's father, David, said: "We are absolutely delighted."

In recent cases the courts have accepted cash-strapped councils' rights to cut home help for disabled people and to require old people in residential homes to pay fees until their assets are nearly exhausted. But councils' duties under the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act and the National Assistance Act, which governed those cases, are vaguer than those under the Education Act. This requires education authorities to provide "efficient education" suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special needs for children unable to go to school.

Beth's home tuition had been reduced from five hours to three hours a week, which her parents said was not enough to give her a realistic chance of completing her GCSEs in English language, literature and mathematics.

East Sussex council, which was given leave to appeal against the decision because of its public importance, would not say whether it would restore lost hours to other affected children. A spokesman said: "We need to study the judgment"

Beth was diagnosed as an ME sufferer in 1990 and stopped attending school in early 1992. She began to receive five hours' home tuition, though she attended a few lessons at the Priory school. Proposals to cut the tuition came when the education authority found a shortfall of more than £3 million in its budget for 1996/97.

Film critics dead enthusiastic

AFTER frothing at the mouth over the "sex and wrecks" movie Crash, the arbiters of moral taste may soon have to contend with a film depicting a young woman's obsession with necrophilia, *writes Alison Daniels.*

Kissed, a first feature by Canadian director Lynne Stopkewich, aged 33, is to be screened at the Cannes film festival in a fortnight amid interest by at least one British distribution company.

The film, based on a short story by the Canadian writer Barbara Goudy, tells of a young woman's fascination with death which leads her to become an embalmer in a funeral parlour. There she becomes obsessed by sex with young male cadavers to the jealousy of her (living) boyfriend.

It has been distributed by Goldwyn Entertainment in America where it has earned high praise from critics. Variety magazine concluded: "Kissed is a poetic, provocative love story about sex, romance and death that is surprisingly endearing."

Firefighters yesterday continued to tackle the blaze which broke out on Tuesday in an area of outstanding natural beauty near Zennor in Cornwall

PHOTOGRAPH: SAM MORGAN MOORE

Fire warnings stepped up in rural areas as dry spell persists

Geoffrey Gibbs

COUNTRYSIDE groups and emergency services yesterday urged the public to show greater awareness of the risks posed by tinderbox conditions after fires devastated heathland on the western tip of Cornwall and a woodland site on the Isle of Wight.

The blazes are the latest to hit important wildlife habitats during the prolonged period of dry weather.

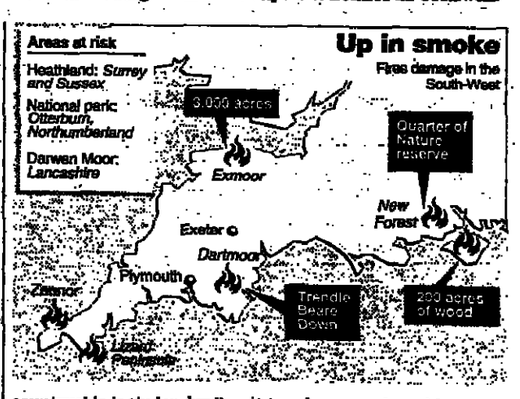
"As the spring has been so dry there is a real risk to some of the country's finest heathland and upland moorland areas," a spokeswoman for the Wildlife Trusts warned yesterday. Dartmoor, Exmoor, the Lizard peninsula and the New Forest have all experienced fires in recent weeks and there is concern for areas such as the Sussex Downs if the dry spell continues.

In Cornwall, the gorse blaze that broke out on Tuesday near Zennor, between St Ives and St Just, ripped through more than 600 acres of a designated area of outstanding natural beauty.

Fire crews called to the scene from all parts of the county were at one stage tackling the blaze over a two mile front. Among the isolated buildings threatened by the flames was the Eagle's Nest, clifftop home of the internationally celebrated artist Patrick Heron.

Cornwall Fire Service spokesman John Warren said the fire had spread rapidly in the stiff breeze with flames moving faster than the firemen could run. But it would have spread even without any wind because conditions were so dry.

"We have been warning people about these conditions and it has come true," he said. "People must take great care at the moment. The countryside is tinder dry."



As firemen continued to damp down the scene yesterday, more than 100 firefighters were battling to control a fire in 200 acres of Brightstone Forest on the Isle of Wight. The blaze — one of the largest ever seen on the island — caused devastation in an area popular with nature lovers and ramblers.

All the Isle of Wight's firefighters were called to the scene as flames spread through scrub and copse land. Four appliances and a water carrier from the Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service were also sent to the island by ferry.

Records show that since April 1996 England and Wales have experienced the driest two year period since 1749. Rainfall in March was only 32 per cent of average. However, the Met Office said yesterday that Britain was in for a period of more unsettled weather. "It looks as if there is wet weather on the way," said a spokesman.

'The weather means that there is a real risk to some of the country's finest areas of heathland and upland'

Socialists are debating a tactical shift to exploit popular fears about the Gaullists' campaign platform, writes **Paul Webster** in Paris

French left leans to Eurosceptic line

Lionel Jospin: EMU warning

A FRENCH opinion poll showing a Gaullist-led government victory in the May snap general election is expected to reinforce opposition to the European single currency among leftwing parties.

Yesterday's survey in Le Parisien newspaper forecast that the conservative coalition would lose about 150 seats but would still have a clear majority, with more than 330 seats, in the national assembly.

Socialists, Communists and Greens were credited with 221 seats (more than double the present number) and the extremist National Front with only one.

But the first poll since Jacques Chirac announced elections for May 25 and June 1 gave a clear indication of weaknesses that could be attacked by the left. More than 80 per cent of those asked said they saw the move as a political manoeuvre by the president, while 68 per cent said they feared further budget austerity.

Leftwing leaders trying to draw up a joint strategy have warned of further cuts in state spending, to ensure entry into a single currency, which could worsen unemployment and poverty.

While party strategists decide whether to step up Euroscepticism, the normally pro-European Socialist press secretary, Lionel Jospin, forecast that a hardline budget was planned by the Gaullist-led administration to further Economic and Monetary Union (EMU), and he promised to oppose the move if the price was too high for the average worker.

The Communist Party national secretary, Robert Hue, whose movement believes EMU to be a capitalist conspiracy, congratulated Mr Jospin on what he called a positive re-evaluation of his thinking on Europe.

One of Mr Jospin's severest critics, Jean-Pierre Chevènement, who left the Socialists to set up the Eurosceptic citizens' movement, agreed that Mr Jospin had adopted a tone on the single currency that was "more resolute than what we are used to".

If the poll forecast is reliable, Mr Jospin will have to take more account of widespread distrust of Europe on the left if he is to retain unity and rally a wider electorate. Political parties are still drawing lessons from the civil service and transport strikes of autumn 1995 that united protesters across the party system against welfare cuts intended to help France qualify for monetary union.

Suspicion is strong, and there will probably be disappointment with Mr Jospin if he fails to give clear guidance on the limits of his pro-Europeanism when he opens the left's campaign today at Sarcelles, a working-class Paris suburb.

His speech will reflect a rare level of unity within the Socialist Party, where former rivals such as Michel Rocard and Laurent Fabius — both former prime ministers — are involved in deciding how to respond to Mr Chirac's decision to put Europe at the centre of the election campaign.

The party has so far decided to concentrate attacks on Alain Juppé, the prime minister and one of the most unpopular leaders of the Fifth Republic, who is expected to call for sacrifices to meet the single currency deadline if he is re-elected.

A further indication of the Socialists' re-evaluation of Euroscepticism was given by Dominique Strauss-Kahn, who would probably be finance minister in a leftwing government. Saying the electorate would pay a heavy price if Mr Juppé were returned, he accused the prime minister of planning to deregulate on a large scale and reduce social protection in a move towards hardline capitalism.

Mr Strauss-Kahn said Socialists wanted a single currency but would impose conditions to ensure it would be used to create jobs and favour growth.

"We don't want a single currency to do nothing with it," he said.

Italian EMU furore, page 13

Fresh blow for Kohl as talks on tax collapse

Ian Traynor in Bonn

CHANCELLOR Helmut Kohl's campaign to modernise Germany's economic and welfare systems and to meet the terms for the single European currency suffered another serious setback yesterday when a tax reform summit with opposition leaders collapsed in acrimony.

The government is to push ahead with its plans to streamline the complicated tax system. It hopes to achieve DM30 billion (£11 billion) in tax cuts by submitting a reform bill for its first reading in parliament tomorrow.

But its hopes of getting the bill into law by the summer recess have been dashed because the opposition Social Democrats, who control the upper house, can block parts of the legislation.

The stalemate will force arbitration. This will probably mean the bill will be watered down and that it will be passed much later than the government planned.

Cabinet members blamed the opposition for refusing to compromise. But Oskar Lafontaine, the combative Social Democrat leader, said Mr Kohl had instantly made clear there would be no deal. The talks collapsed in the chancellery within an hour of being convened.

A Kohl-Lafontaine deal would have been a tonic for business and investor confidence.

Although the tax cuts are not scheduled to take effect until 1998-99, the collapse of the talks could hamper growth prospects this year and make it harder for the government to cut spending further in the frantic race to qualify for the euro.

The government bill aims to implement DM30 billion in cuts by reducing corporate taxes, slashing the top rate of income tax from 53 per cent to 39 per cent and the lowest rate to 15 per cent from almost 26 per cent.

The Social Democrats largely agreed to the corporate and lower income tax rates for the poor but baulked at the personal tax cuts for the rich. They also wanted to couple the tax reforms to reductions in social insurance contributions.

While the government is united behind Mr Kohl, who has declared he will run for re-election next year, Mr Lafontaine is at odds on the tax reform issue with Gerhard Schroeder, the prime minister of the state of Lower Saxony who is Mr Lafontaine's main rival to become the Social Democrats candidate next year for chancellorship.

Two Greek soldiers with the multinational force in Albania make themselves at home in Vlore after painting Hellas (Greece) on their mess hall wall PHOTOGRAPH: DIETHER ENDLICHER

Berlin yuppies saved by nimby

Denis Staunton in Berlin

AN anti-yuppie protest planned in Berlin on May 1 is under threat as leftwing groups from east and west argue over where to hold it. Both have been affected by a last-minute outbreak of nimby-ism — not in my back yard. Westerners want to demonstrate in the eastern district of Prenzlauer Berg while eastern activists want to move further west.

Last year's May Day demonstration ended in a pitched battle with police at Kollwitzplatz, a square in the bohemian quarter of Prenzlauer Berg. Thousands of police officers made more than 400 arrests but failed to prevent DM1 million in damage to shops and businesses.

Members of Berlin's anarchist *Autonomen*, or autonomous groups, claim that Prenzlauer Berg has become a prime target for developers eager to boost property values through gentrification. But local activists say that last year's riot damaged the district's poor residents more than rich property sharks.

May Day has been a red letter day in the Berlin police calendar since 1987, when hundreds of young anarchists rioted all night in the run-down West Berlin district of Kreuzberg. Two supermarkets were set alight and dozens of shops were looted.

The campaign against gentrification in Kreuzberg included hurling bags of manure into expensive restaurants and threatening shopkeepers with arson. But the district's Green Party mayor, Franz Schulz, is determined that, 10 years on, the May Day demonstration should stay well clear of Kreuzberg.

The latest compromise route lies between Prenzlauer Berg and Kreuzberg, running through Berlin's old Jewish quarter.

The demonstration will be led by two banners, one reading "Against Oppression and Exploitation". But the second banner, bearing a quotation from the 19th century anarchist writer Emma Goldmann, may offer a more accurate reflection of the mood of many demonstrators as they march past Berlin's Techno clubs: "If I can't dance here, it's not my revolution."

Fraud 'costs EU over £80bn a year'

A study finds organised criminals are abandoning balaclavas and guns for suits and pens. **Stephen Bates** reports from Brussels

CROSS-BORDER fraud in the European Union may be worth at least £42 billion a year and fraud within individual countries probably more than doubles the total, according to an independent report.

Deloitte and Touche, the accountancy firm which conducted the study for the European Commission, estimated that three-quarters of international fraud, from illegal credit card use and mobile phone cloning to counterfeit banknotes, may directly affect businesses and individuals rather than governments.

Will Inglis, the forensic accountant who drew up the findings, admitted that no one knows the true cost of a crime sector that has burgeoned because of technological developments and the opening of the EU's internal frontiers.

Mr Inglis, a Briton who specialises in company fraud cases, said: "Organised criminals are devoting more of their efforts to fraud. The man in the balaclava with a shotgun has realised that he will get a lower sentence and more money if he goes dressed in a suit and armed with a pen instead."

The accountants say that most fraud is white-collar, perpetrated by senior management or made possible by their incompetence or their inability to keep track of transactions.

The report is directly relevant to the British election campaign. The Conservatives say the fight against fraud is one of their key achievements in the EU, while maintaining they will oppose attempts to harmonise court systems which the report says would help counter cross-border crime.

Mr Inglis said: "There is clear evidence that determined fraudsters deliberately and cynically manipulate the different regulatory and monitoring regimes across the EU.

"The problem must be tackled on an international basis, as purely national measures will merely have the effect of transferring the fraud from one location to another. By encouraging nations to bring their own legislation into line it should be possible to reduce the total incidence of fraud."

He was backed by John Tomlinson, a British Labour MEP who recently chaired a committee researching transit fraud: "This challenges politicians who say yes to the single market and then are paranoid about anything which gives rise to transnational co-operation."

Examples outlined by the report include an Interpol estimate that nearly £90 million worth of forged currency was seized in 1995 — more than £30 million worth of lire in Italy alone in the previous three years — and an assessment that mobile phone cloning may be costing £25 million a year just in Britain.

More than 40 per cent of British fraud cases are reckoned to have an international aspect and a quarter of Britain's £19 million annual credit card frauds occur abroad.

While there is evidence of organised crime in some sectors, such as cigarette smuggling, there is also much freelance activity.

Two-thirds of the loose tobacco used in Britain is thought to have been imported clandestinely from Belgium, where duties are only a quarter as high. In Portugal, an estimated 1,000 lorry-loads of cigarettes go missing each year, at a cost of £700 million in lost duties.

Belgian killer taunts police

Stephen Bates in Brussels

BELGIUM was anxiously waiting last night to discover whether the country's much-criticised police force had caught a gruesome serial killer who has scattered the severed remains of several women in supermarket bags around the southern city of Mons.

The police refused to confirm unofficial reports that they were questioning a man in connection with the "Butcher of Mons" case which is vying with the country's unfolding paedophile scandal to give Belgium an unsavoury reputation.

Severed arms, legs, feet, a torso and a head have been found in neatly tied bags around Mons over the last few weeks. The killer appears to have a grim sense of humour, since the bags have turned up in locations such as Worry Street and Deposit Street.

Police think they may have found parts of the bodies of up to six women, some of whom appear to have been killed as long ago as two years — and stored in a refrigerator.

The authorities believe that the killer may have anatomical expertise because of the neat way the limbs had been severed.

A police spokesman said: "This is clearly the work of a highly intelligent, ritual psychopath, as you can see from the way the body parts are cut, the way they are wrapped and the places in which they are deposited."

Investigators were able yesterday to claim a breakthrough by announcing they had identified one of the killer's victims whose head they found last week.

But most of the bodies remain unidentified. The police have issued the description of a fair-haired man with a white van, seen near the site of one of the discoveries.

World news in brief

Rwandan Hutu refugees 'flee slaughter'

ZAIREAN villagers said yesterday that Tutsi-dominated rebels had slaughtered many Rwandan Hutu refugees at camps south of Kisangani, and aid workers said they had reports that up to 55,000 refugees had fled.

The villagers, travelling towards Kisangani, said there had been a pitched battle between rebels and refugees during the slaughter on Tuesday at camps near Kasese village.

"The [rebel] army went to the camp at 8am yesterday. They killed many, many refugees — hundreds. There was lots of shooting all morning," Alphonse Soku, a farmer, said. He said the rebels had used a mechanical digger to bury the bodies.

The United Nations refugee agency (UNHCR) said it was checking reports that all 55,000 refugees had fled the camps after a rebel military operation on Tuesday and attacks by villagers. The Hutus, who fled Rwanda in 1994, are accused by Tutsis of genocide in Rwanda. — Reuter.

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UN envoy visits Western Sahara

THE United Nations envoy for Western Sahara, James Baker, arrived in Morocco yesterday on a fact-finding mission on the disputed territory.

His visit follows threats last month of renewed war by the Polisario Front, which seeks independence for the Western Sahara.

The UN is frustrated at the lack of progress in resolving an issue that has soured relations between Algeria and Morocco.

Rabat controls most of the territory and says it is part of Morocco.

Polisario took up arms in 1976; the UN brokered a ceasefire in 1991. — Reuter.

Clashes kill 65 in Nigeria

Five more people have been killed in communal clashes in Nigeria's oil-producing Warri area, bringing deaths in the past two weeks to 65. — Reuter.

Skinheads jailed

A state court in Potsdam yesterday sentenced two German skinheads to eight- and 15-year jail terms for beating Italian workers with baseball bats last year. — AP.

Rollercop

Pickpockets will have to get their skates on to outpace Amsterdam police's latest mobile patrol. Officers are using rollerblades to keep up with the city's fast-moving street criminals. — AP.

'Russian role' in gas attack

A FORMER member of Aum Shinri Kyo, the doomsday cult accused of a lethal nerve gas attack on Tokyo's underground railway, testified yesterday that blueprints for the cult's gas plant came from a former Russian security official, Kyodo News reported.

Yoshihiro Inoue reportedly said the former secretary of the Russian security council, Oleg Lobov, had been paid £50,000 for the blueprints.

Cult members are being tried for murder, attempted murder and other crimes related to the sarin gas attack in March 1995, which killed 12 people and made thousands ill.

A spokesman for Russia's federal security service dismissed the report as "total nonsense". — AP.

Clinton meets Tibet's spiritual leader amid growing tension

Martin Walker in Washington

THE United States president, Bill Clinton, yesterday met the Dalai Lama, Tibet's exiled spiritual leader, when he "dropped by" the office of the vice-president, Al Gore, despite official objections about the visit from Beijing and amid new claims that China is improperly using US technology for military purposes.

The New York Times reported yesterday that US intelligence had gathered firm evidence that China was using hi-tech machine tools acquired from the US aerospace firm McDonnell Douglas through a joint manufacturing agreement to build missiles and warplanes.

The revelation is likely to intensify the opposition among Republicans and protectionist Democrats to a renewal this year of China's trade privileges.

The situation is complicated by the religious right, who are campaigning against China's trade privileges because of its religious discrimination.

President Clinton judged that he had to make time yesterday to see the Dalai Lama, but made the meeting a "drop-by", as if he just happened to find the Tibetan leader sitting on Mr Gore's sofa.

"When you drop in," said a former US ambassador to Beijing, James Lilley, "you are downgrading someone because you don't receive him in the Oval Office. But you're upgrading him, because you've made his day. So you keep everybody happy."

Dr Mawhinney obviously released the War Book yesterday afternoon because he believes it will help the Tory campaign.

But the more one examines the War Book, the less shocking and damaging it seems, and the more it seems simply prudent.

Strengths & Weaknesses

Labour Strengths

TB
- young
- strong
- dynamic

New Labour
- changed
- safer
- new ideas

Future/newness

Time for change

For all the people

Leadership

Education

NHS

Industry, investment

Labour Weaknesses

Money
- interest rates
- inflation
- tax

Fear of Labour
- hidden left
- unions
- inexperience

What do they stand for
- how will they pay for their plans
- why are they evasive

Break up of Britain
- devolution/Europe

Labour Councils

Conservative Strengths

Economy
- inflation
- interest rates
- economic competence

Patriotism
- Europe
- the Union

Major: decent, honest

Continuity: better the devil you know

Conservative Weaknesses

17 years too long. Time for them to go

For the few, not the many

Major: weak leadership

Division/disintegration

Betrayal/trust

Tax

NHS

Education

Crime

The Battleground

Labour	Conservative
Themes	
Tories in power too long.	Don't take the risk of change.
Tories for the few.	Labour will penalise success.
Major weak.	"Phoney" Tony.
Tories broken their word.	Labour say one thing, do another.
Issues	
Labour will equip the economy for the future.	The strongest economy in Europe.
Tax: Tories put them up, broke their word.	Labour will put taxes up as they always do.
Schools: Standards down.	Labour will level down.
NHS: Labour will rebuild.	Labour will turn the clock back.
Business: will support Labour.	Labour will piss the costs onto business.
Europe: Britain marginalised.	Labour will sell out to Brussels.
Crime: Doubled.	Labour soft on crime.
Devolution: More say.	Labour will break up Britain.
The Balance of Risk	
Labour Safe: New constitution; Business; No tax dropped.	Tories Safe: Genuine; Economic success; Experienced.
Tories a Risk: VAT; NHS; Schools/pensions; Water; Guns.	Labour a Risk: Tax; Inflation; Interest rates; Britain.

Summary of our Message

Two Futures

New Labour is fit to face the future — New party, new constitution, united around its manifesto	The Conservatives are unfit to govern – they put the future at risk. — Divided, incompetent, dishonest
A future for the many	A future for the few
A future in which Britain leads. (Blair strong)	A future in which Britain is pushed around. (Major weak)
A future in which we are all better off	A future in which we are more and more worse off
LABOUR'S PLEDGE FOR THE FUTURE — Cut waiting lists; Cut class sizes; Tough on crime/tough on guns & knives; Young people into work paid for by tax on fat cats; Strong economy/cut VAT on fuel	TORY PLEDGE FOR THE FUTURE (PROVISIONAL: TO BE DEVELOPED) — Paying to see a GP; Paying for books; More guns, knives, crime; Fat cats make us pay more for water; VAT on food

Target Audiences

TARGET GROUP 1: SWING VOTERS:

Mortgage holders; younger; higher incomes.

TARGET GROUP 2: WOMEN

Younger (25-34); weak: Labour identifiers; nervous about change; nervous about a Labour government; less aware of Labour policies & Labour reforms. Think Major decent and honest. Prone to "Better the devil you know."

TARGET GROUP 3: FIRST TIME VOTERS

Low propensity to vote. Concerned about money and jobs.

TARGET GROUP 4: DEs

Low propensity to vote. What is in it for me? Low awareness of what Labour has to offer.

TARGET GROUP 5: PENNINE BELT

More suspicious of Labour; more focused on money; stronger economy. 15 seats.

Labour's Election Tasks

Remind

22 Tory taxes. You are paying more tax under the Tories.
Four in ten 11-year-old children are below an acceptable standard in Maths and English.
There have been 20,000 new managers, and 50,000 fewer nurses.
Crime has doubled under the Tories.
1 in 5 homes has no wage earner.

Reassure

400,000 members.
New Constitution agreed by a massive majority of members.
Early manifesto endorsed by the party membership.
New Labour has forged a partnership with Business.

Reward

Cut class sizes to 30 or under for 5, 6 and 7-year-olds;
Fast track punishment for young offenders;
Cut NHS waiting lists by treating an extra 100,000 patients;
Get 250,000 under-25s off benefit and into work;
Set tough rules for government spending and borrowing, ensure low inflation; strengthen the economy;

Plus: cut VAT on fuel; 10p starting rate.

Tory Strategy Summary

Conservatism is safe / New Labour is Dangerous

Negative	Positive
New Labour New Dangers	Strongest economy in Europe
Interest rates inflation	Lowest inflation; lowest interest rates; fastest growth
Sell out to Brussels	Money: £750 better off
Break up Britain	Trust: "Honest John"
Trust: "Smarmy Tony"	Patriotism: stand up to Brussels keep the union

Labour's plan of attack

Leaked War Book highlights main strengths and weaknesses in candid detail

Martin Kettle

THE TITLE of Labour's leaked battle plan says it all. "War Book: Version 3". Those words show exactly how Labour sees the 1997 election — not as a contest to be played by gentlemanly election rules but as a *war* in which there is one winner and one loser.

But they also reveal the extent of Labour's preparations. As the title confirms, the document released by Brian Mawhinney yesterday was already the third version of a plan that has been constantly revised and updated. As Labour confessed last night, the version which fell into enemy hands is around six months old: which begs the question — how many more versions have there been since?

Dr Mawhinney obviously released the War Book yesterday afternoon because he believes it will help the Tory campaign. In the short run, that may be true. Everybody likes to see a secret document and this one contains admissions of weakness with which the Tories hope to embarrass Labour. Publicity was therefore guaranteed.

On the face of it, the document initially confirms those Conservative hopes. One of the great rules of political life is that it is always a mistake to admit weakness. But this document is full of such hostages to fortune. They are even listed in capital letters. LABOUR WEAKNESSES. CONSERVATIVE STRENGTHS. No wonder Dr Mawhinney went to the trouble of supplying the press with photocopies yesterday.

Central Office strategists believe that Labour's admissions that it is "weak" on interest rates, inflation and tax, and that fear of Labour focuses on anxiety about the hidden left, the unions and the party's inexperience, will cause more voters to hesitate and join the drift away from Labour, which the Guardian/ICM survey strikingly revealed yesterday. They believe that Labour's admission that the Conservatives have strengths on the economy, patriotism, John Major's decency and honesty, and on continuity will help to sap Labour morale after this week's bad poll news.

Like everything else in the War Book, the strengths and weaknesses are set out in short, sharp headings, in a form which is a familiar cross between post-modern "list journalism" and the present-day marketing vogue for visual presentations. As with Tony Blair's speeches, there is hardly a traditional sentence in it. No Verbs. Just bullet points.

But the more one examines the War Book, the less shocking and damaging it seems and the more it seems simply prudent and professional. For the War Book is clearly the distillation of long efforts to explain the shape of the 1997 contest clearly to party activists. It is balanced and frank. Like all good military manuals it begins with a cold-eyed and objective assessment of the terrain, the forces available to both sides, the two armies' weapons and their best tactical options.

If it simply told the party a series of lies and untested assumptions, it wouldn't be much use for its purpose. It beggars belief to think the Conservatives do not have something very similar in Central Office. But one wonders if their version is quite so honest.

So the War Book reduces the contest to eight simple headings. Four of them are seen as threats to Labour which must be repulsed: the economy, fear of Labour, Major and Europe. Four of them are opportunities which Labour can exploit: business, tax, education and the threat of another Tory term. It may all look a bit glib and symmetrical, a little too tidy for the real world of electoral street-fighting, but those eight headings actually cover almost everything that has happened in the 1997 election so far.

The central Labour message is also set out with great economy and clarity. "In 1997 the British people face the choice of two futures. New Labour will build a New Britain in which every family is better off and can enjoy a secure future. The Tories are not fit to govern Britain, and will damage every family through more VAT, worse schools, dismantling the NHS and more crime." A simplification, perhaps, but a pretty concise one for candidates and canvassers to remember.

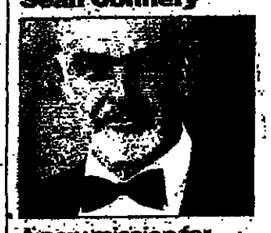
It is true that the War Book is the product of a Labour culture which gets high on discipline and speaking in unison. Labour's election tasks, it explains, fall into three categories: the three Rs of this campaign, though, are Remind, Reassure and Reward. All over the country, one imagines Labour candidates preparing for bed at night reciting "Remind, Reassure, Reward".

In some respects, the most revealing part of the document is the page which identifies the five target groups at whom the Labour message is to be principally aimed. These are: swing voters, characterised as typically mortgage holders, younger people on higher incomes; women, especially the 25-40 age group who are nervous about change and about Labour and who like Major's decency and honesty; first-time voters, who are less likely to vote than their elders and are concerned about money and jobs; the DEs — unskilled and unemployed manual workers who have a low propensity to vote and tend to ask what's in it for them; and, finally, voters in the 15 seats in the crucial Pennine Belt, who are unusually suspicious of Labour and who cast their votes on the basis of economic self-interest and confidence.

A Conservative campaign worker handing out copies of Labour's War Book outside Central Office yesterday PHOTOGRAPH: MARTIN ARGLES

7 days to go

Good day: Sean Connery



A new mission for the original James Bond, writing letters from Marbella asking thousands of Scots to back the SNP. From Spain With Love, no doubt.

Bad day: Jack Cunningham

Labour's invisible shadow finally appeared in public — only to have his thunder on the lottery stolen by Tony Blair and Dr Miriam Stoppard.

Claim of the day

"I don't know which poll you are talking about" — Shadow Chancellor Gordon Brown on Election Call

Stunt of the day

22 Labour supporters donned John Major masks to highlight tax increases since 1992.

Birthday

William Shakespeare's 433rd. Paddy Ashdown marked it by promising a Lib Dem books bonanza and lamenting the Government's record as a "comedy of errors".

St George's Day

John Major bizarrely chose St George's Day to campaign in Scotland: "I look forward to being back in Scotland on St Andrew's Day as Prime Minister."

Grey day

Health Secretary Stephen Dorrell bid for the grey vote, claiming "pensioners can't trust New Labour".

Wednesday

A Wobbly one for Labour.

Sierra driver of the day

Cheery news for Tony Blair from Simon May, 27, driver of silver Sierra, reg C605 AKE. "There is not much to choose between them, but I'll probably vote Labour."

Andrew Culf

It is the people's lottery. It should address the people's priorities. It should make an impact on the lives of every man, woman and child
Tony Blair

Mr Clarke said the drop in the number out of work was likely to overstate the fall because of the introduction of the Job Seekers' Allowance
Treasury minutes

Blair gives pledge of 'people's lottery'

Rebecca Smithers
Political Correspondent

LABOUR yesterday unveiled its plans to divert millions of pounds of lottery profits into education and health, pledging to revamp the Tories' flagship scheme as "the people's lottery".

In one of the Labour "surprises" promised for the remainder of the election campaign, Tony Blair welcomed the success of the lottery — launched two years ago — but said a Labour government would guarantee that it helped ordinary people throughout the country.

"New Labour plans to make the midweek lottery a billion-pound jackpot for the whole of Britain — the people's lottery; the people's priorities," the Labour leader told a London news conference. He was flanked by celebrities who endorsed the proposals.

Mr Blair explained that he wanted to switch the money into schemes that would not otherwise qualify for Whitehall cash. But the proposals attracted criticism from teachers' organisations worried that they might lead to lottery cash being substituted for long-term investment.

The plans involve a package of at least £1 billion — a minimum of £200 million a year — over the five years of the next parliament. Some sketchy details were published in the Labour manifesto. But Mr Blair disclosed yesterday that the party had decided to bring forward its plans to fund a cash programme in information technology skills and competence for teachers, which was originally due to start once the Millennium Exhibition is over, "so this vital investment happens much sooner".

The second element is a fund to support the development of after-school homework clubs, boosted by partnerships between schools and voluntary organisations.

Third, Labour proposes a fund to promote healthier living, involving alliances between NHS professionals and local health and leisure providers. Finally, its National Endowment for Science and the Arts — a national "talent fund" relying on contributions from successful sports and business people — would be launched with a contribution from lottery money.

The party believes the lottery should be used to enhance the quality of life for ordinary people, rather than being used for "elite" projects such as the Royal Opera House, or the purchase of the £12 million Churchill papers.

"That can't be right," Mr Blair said. "It is the people's lottery. It should address the people's priorities. It should make an impact on the lives of every man, woman and child in Britain. That's what John Major promised when the lottery began."

The National Heritage Secretary, Virginia Bottomley, said Labour's scheme would increase bureaucracy and threaten the concept that it should only fund projects additional to those already met by central government.

The National Union of Teachers welcomed Labour's announcement of in-service training for teachers in IT, but said: "Lottery income is unpredictable, as the experience of scratch cards has shown. Such essential provision as the training of teachers should not be dependent on unreliable sources of funding."

Up to his neck in muck and ballot – and he's loving it

Sketch
Simon Hoggart

THE day in Tatton started marvellously for Martin Bell. A letter arrived from Sir Alec Guinness saying "You have huge moral support from everyone I know," and enclosing a cheque for £100.

It went less well for Neil Hamilton, who made only his second public appearance of the campaign, to launch his manifesto.

It was hard not to feel a scintilla of sympathy for him. He has spent nearly all the campaign indoors. When he emerged yesterday the press harangued him with real hostility, and passers-by shouted: "Thief" and "You're corrupt!" One of the many loony candidates here, a Lord Byro, kept up a continuous barrage of abuse. Mr Hamilton fiddled nervously with his finger and maintained the glassy grin as he kept repeating: "I only want to answer questions on the issues."

But his eyes told the story. When the politician's gleam fades they look hunted and haunted, like a man finally reaching the end of a very long rope.

Next to him his wife, Christine, is a mobile Portrait of Dorian Gray, showing his real thoughts on her face. She is angry, defiant and outraged. Once she shouted to a tormentor "You're the one who is lying!" And he murmured sadly, "Let me handle it, it's my press conference."

In a few minutes, the anguish was over and they scuttled back inside the Conservative Club. He has avoided every meeting so far, possibly to steer clear of Miss Moneypenny, a 7ft tall transvestite who campaigns with a birdcage on his head, but mainly to avoid Martin Bell, whom he plainly loathes.

"You'll notice," said Mr Bell, "that all his posters are on trees and hedges, never in people's houses. Unless I'm mistaken, trees and hedges do not have a vote. Nobody wants to admit they support him."

If posters mean anything, Bell will triumph. He also has the public support of the Manchester United manager Alex Ferguson ("That was a very important handshake") and in the first five days received considerably more money than he is permitted to spend.

Last week Hamilton threatened him with several libel writs. "I didn't know what to do. I don't even have a lawyer. I'm 58, and he's the first enemy I've ever had."

We went to canvass in Great Budworth, a gorgeous old village, usually solid Tory territory. Apart from one blue sign on a tree, all the posters were for Bell. His reception was astonishing, quite the best I've seen for any candidate this election, except Mo Mowlam.

An expensively dressed woman driving a BMW screeched to a halt. "We are definitely voting for you!" she shouted, clearly a founder member of Beamers for Bell.

A retired soldier hobbled up and wrote a cheque for £50 on the spot. (The extra money will go for post-election expenses.) Two plump male cyclists in ill-advised lycra leggings paused to offer warm support.

"It's the most vibrant campaign I've ever seen," Bell said. "I just wish I was able to cover it."

He talks to the voters with a hushed urgency, even pressing them to vote for Hamilton "if you think he's the best candidate, the most trustworthy candidate".

But he doesn't like him. For Bell, this is no stunt. He detests everything Hamilton stands for, everything he seems to regard as normal practice, and the seeping corruption of British public life. He will mind dreadfully if he loses next week. If he wins, he will quit after one term, "but by then the poison will have been drained from here".

Meanwhile, the campaign is enormous fun. Bell himself, his huge minder, a cameraman called Nigel Bateson, the various "Bell belles" including his beautiful daughter Melissa, and the always substantial press entourage spend a fair amount of time in the many excellent pubs.

In one, two blokes looked up from their pints. "We couldn't vote for a man who drinks," said one. (Northern humour does verge on the predictable.)

"This is medicinal," said the other. "Then you must be very ill," the candidate snapped, but amiably.

"I expect you'd sooner be dodging bullets, wouldn't you?" said the first chap.

"I would, I would," he replied. But it's not really true. I think he's having the time of his life.

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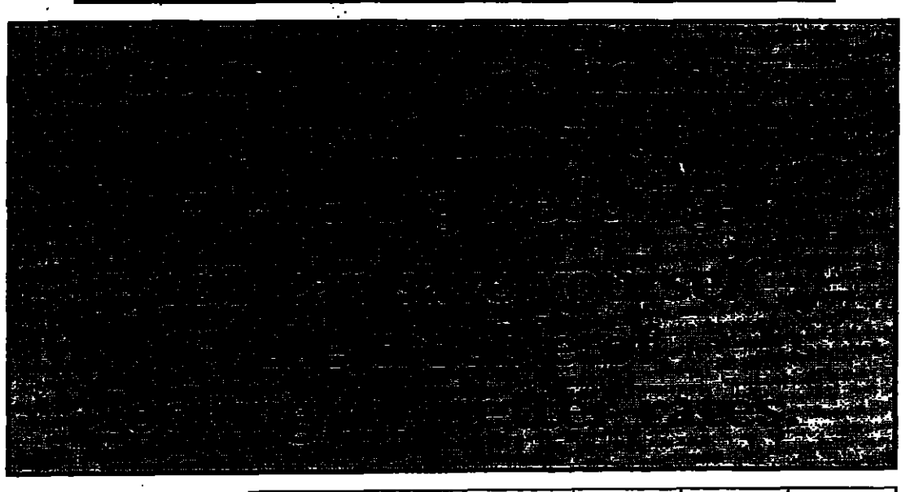

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Clarke rejects 'booming' slogan

Clarke said unemployment figures misleading

Larry Elliott
Economics Editor

THE Chancellor, Kenneth Clarke, rejected the "Britain is booming" slogan on which his party is basing its appeal to voters less than two weeks before the election campaign started, it was revealed yesterday.

Minutes of the meeting between Mr Clarke and Bank of England governor Eddie George in early March show the Chancellor keen to downplay the economy's strength in a bid to fend off calls for higher interest rates.

Under pressure from Mr George to raise borrowing costs, Mr Clarke said unemployment was falling less rapidly than the Government's figures suggested, that rising earnings were caused by City bonuses and that consumer spending was sustainable.

The minutes reflect the Chancellor's view the economy is set fair for a period of non-inflationary growth, but sit oddly with the claims made by the Conservatives since the start of the election. According to the Treasury minutes of the meeting on March 5, Mr Clarke said the drop in the number of people out of work and claiming benefit — 60,000 a month on average since last October — was "likely to overstate the fall because of the introduction of the Job Seekers Allowance".

When the dole queues were measured by the internationally-agreed Labour Force Survey, "the rate of decline in unemployment was less steep", the Chancellor said.

The minutes add that Mr Clarke then stressed that "the improving labour market had still had very little effect on pay settlements, which remained around three per cent on average. "Earnings growth was unchanged at 4.25 per cent in December, and reflected good bonus payments in the financial sector".

Twelve days after Mr Clarke brushed aside a rise in interest rates, the Prime Minister made it clear that he would use the "booming economy" as the central plank of the Conservative's strategy.

But the minutes show Mr Clarke used the opposite argument to fend off calls from Mr George for a quarter-point rise in interest rates to damp down excessive demand.

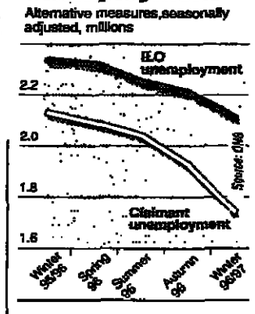
The Governor said that although the rise in the value of the pound was helping to combat inflation by reducing the price of imports, the strength of consumer spending would inevitably put upward pressure on prices. If the necessary action was delayed, "then more substantial tightening would eventually become unavoidable".

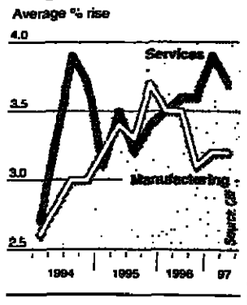
Mr George's fears about the re-emergence of inflation — is shared by the International Monetary Fund, which last night stressed that the economy was in danger of overheating unless interest rates were raised speedily.

In its World Economic Outlook, the IMF said Britain would comfortably have the fastest growth rate of any of the leading European nations this year, but added that inflation would exceed the Government's 2.5 per cent target if interest rates were left at six per cent.

But, according to the minutes, Mr Clarke said he expected inflation to fall below 2.5 per cent this year. There were "upside and downside risks" after that. "The Chancellor said that consumer demand was growing at a strong but sustainable rate."

Only in one area — the housing market — did Mr Clarke admit that there were signs of a boom, but he predicted that the phenomenon would not last. "A shortage of properties was pushing house price inflation up temporarily, but housing starts had picked up and would lead to an increase in supply".





City notebook, page 12

New Labour think we'll be glad they are 'tough on crime', but we'd rather they gave people a reason not to be criminals
Debbie Miller

It just looks to me like middle aged blokes doing it for themselves
Catherine Duff

Ups and downs

- Born: October 5, 1948, in Royal Victoria Hospital, Belfast
- Education: St Mary's Christian Brothers grammar school
- Career: Left school before taking A levels, to work as a barman. In August 1969 became a full-time republican activist, joining the Provisional IRA and Provisional Sinn Fein when the movement split at the end of the same year. Interned twice, held talks with William Whitelaw as part of IRA delegation, sentenced for attempting to escape from prison. Became party's vice president in 1978, president in 1983
- High point: Becoming MP for West Belfast in 1983
- Low point: IRA Canary Wharf bomb in 1996 which wrecked his peace strategy
- Personal life: Married Colette in 1971. They have a son, Gearóid

Cult figure in midst of confusion

THE PLAYERS/If Sinn Fein's political bandwagon stalls, what arguments will Gerry Adams have left to sway the IRA?

'FOUR GREEN Fields!" barks the lead flute, and the Short Strand "Unbowed and Unbroken" republican band launches itself into a raucous threnody. Rat-a-tat-a-tat-a sings the big drum, sending small mongrels into yapping mode.

"Aren't they good?" sighs a lady sitting on a wall smoking. "And they've only been going a wee while."

At the corner of Beechfield Street there is a sudden ripple of activity. "He's coming!" squeals a little girl, and the children run to the top of the street, to the consternation of Gerry Adams' ever-alert bodyguards. A three-car convoy pulls up and suddenly the Sinn Fein president is among us. The sun seems to shine a little stronger.

"All right son? Fair play to you," and he cuffs a boy about the head, turns and autographs an election poster of himself and picks up another child to be photographed with. "Gerry! It's Gerry Adams!" the kids scream. "He's lovely isn't he?" says the lady, puffing away. "Television doesn't do him justice."

The band moves off, beating out its tribal message, its young members swaggering along in co-ordinated green sweaters and black berets. Mr Adams' minders fan out, two up front, one wing-man and another bringing up the rear. The deafening noise brings couples out on to their doorsteps to see what is causing all the commotion. The Sinn Fein army, Irish and republican, is on the move.

There is no time for talk of politics. Nor any need. His mere presence is enough. Mr Adams moves briskly, shaking hands and offering greetings. "Take it easy now, *slan*," he smiles. "I'll not wash my hand for a week," cries a teenage girl.

The development of a personality cult is going into overdrive in the closing stages of Sinn Fein's energetic campaign. In the Andersonstown News a half-page advert asks the people of west Belfast to vote for Mr Adams and features pictures of him with Nelson Mandela, President Clinton, Irish president Mary Robinson, and former taoiseach Albert Reynolds.

And also the SDLP leader John Hume. A curious tactic this. How often do we see the leader of a political party employ a picture of the party leader of his main rival, Dr Joe Hendron MP, to improve his own chances? Odder still, the advert does not carry the name of the party Mr Adams leads.

Nobody is more closely linked with the peace process than Mr Adams. Its success or failure could determine his future, and these are confusing times in Northern Ireland. On the one hand there is Sinn Fein, for so long the apologist of the IRA, broadcasting its "a vote for us is a vote for peace" message. And on the other there is the SDLP, traditional vote of nationalist moderation, which has spent the past two years locked in a nervous embrace with Mr Adams, proclaiming that a vote for Sinn Fein is a vote for IRA violence.

Who should the voters believe? A fortnight ago the IRA shot an RUC reservist, a mother of three children, in the back. Since then the IRA has paralysed transport systems with its "maximum disruption, minimum risk" strategy.

During all of this, Mr Adams has expressed his regret and opined that he wants to see an end to all armed actions. At his party's annual conference last weekend in Monaghan he used the word "change" again and again, said he "could do business" with the British Government, swore Sinn Fein was "absolutely committed to democratic and peaceful methods of resolving problems", urged republicans to be patient in their dealings with unionists, argued the need to be pragmatic in negotiations, and spoke of a transition period.

"We are on a journey from the past into a new future," he eulogised. But can he take the IRA with him? And if he cannot, is he prepared to leave them behind? Or will they leave *him* behind? It has been evident for some time that the republican movement is split on where to go next, the militarist rump is deeply sceptical of the road the politicos, fronted by Mr Adams, want to go down.

For this reason Sinn Fein needs to do well on May 1. It needs to win not just West Belfast for Mr Adams, but Mid-Ulster for Martin McGuinness and, better still, West Tyrone for vice-president Pat Doherty, an awesome triumvirate of republicanism. A clinching argument surely for the hardest of hard men and women, considering the years of sacrifice and toil and leadership they represent?

A huge gamble is being taken. If it fails, and Sinn Fein's political bandwagon stalls, what arguments will Mr Adams have left? It is axiomatic that if the peace process fails to deliver Sinn Fein real political clout then the traditional argument that only physical force can deliver a united Ireland and Brits Out will prevail.

The SDLP says he must have the moral courage to disown violence

But what of that vision of a new Ireland which Mr Adams espoused so eloquently in Monaghan. Can he really believe any more in tiocfaidh ar la — our day will come — when every other political party in Ireland, North and South, has signed up to "the unionist veto", in other words that the majority in Northern Ireland have the right to decide their future? Can he be the De Klerk figure which Irish republicanism, a minority political belief asserted by violence, so badly needs?

Ask him and he deploys the familiar brick wall of evasions. Mr Adams has to raise his voice above the din of the flute band, the big drum still sounding like a heavy calibre belt-fed machine gun. "What we want to see is the end of all violence and the people know that's our project ... and if you look over there, that's Harland and Wolff," he says, pointing at the landmark yellow cranes of the dockyards. "And how many of you people have worked there?" he asks the gaggle of eight-year-olds clutching at his trousers.

Well, patently none of them, but it allows him to press the replay button on his "equality and justice" speech, scratching at the scab of Northern Ireland's past iniquities to portray Ulster as the "same as it ever was" — a protestant state for a protestant people.

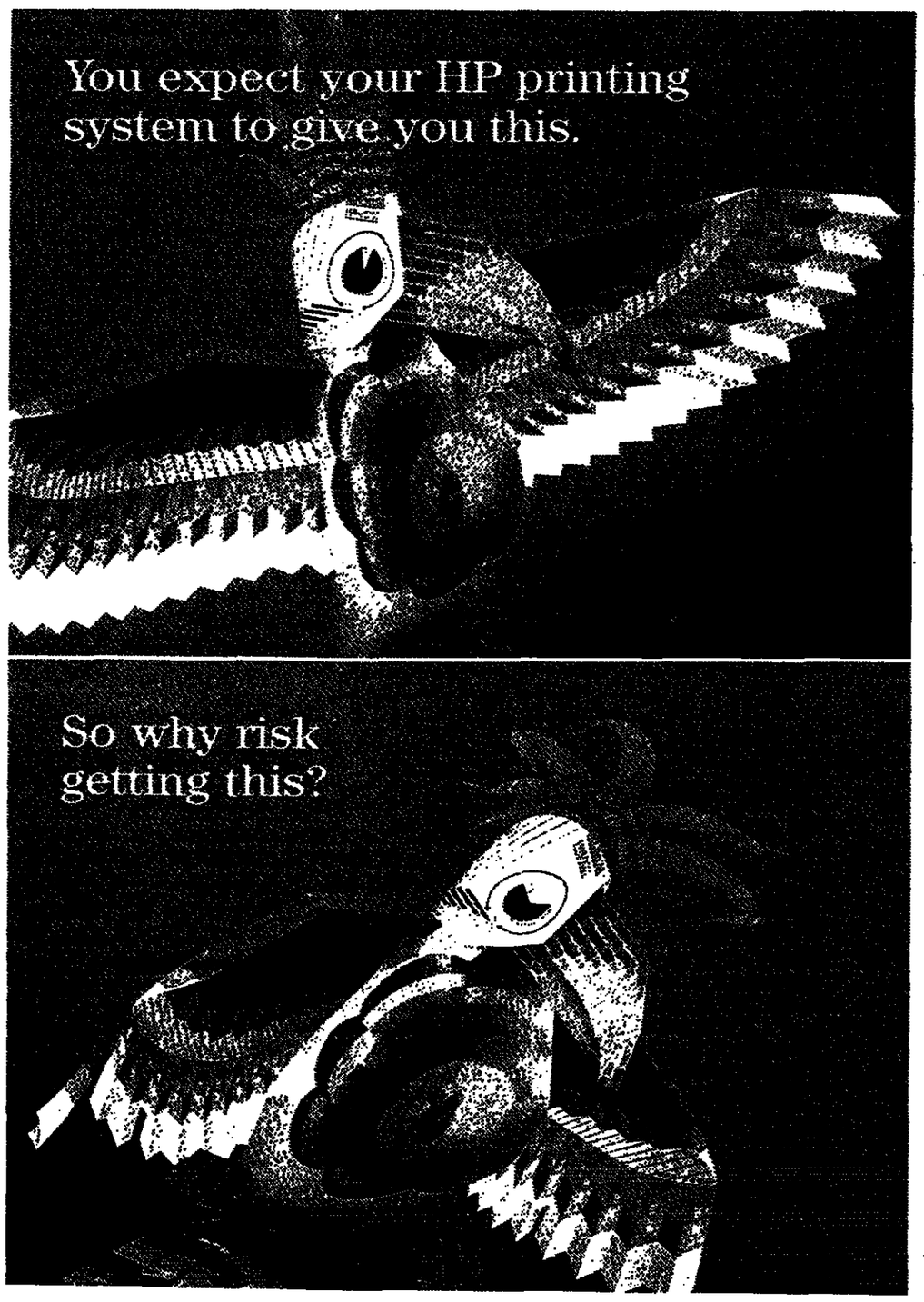
In the middle distance an RUC patrol is protecting Mr Adams' canvas convoy from potential attack. Some of the kids swimming in Mr Adams' wake have detached themselves and are playing on the bonnet of an RUC armoured Land Rover, aided and abetted by its flak-jacketed occupants.

A day earlier Mr Adams had spoken feelingly to reporters of the very real danger that we might be covering his funeral or that of any member of the Sinn Fein leadership in the coming days. Remembering another despairing comment from the SF platform in Monaghan that they could be forgiven for wondering "if anybody's listening to what we're saying" it is hard not to conclude that here is a man who is struggling to put the big black dog of physical force republicanism to sleep, forever.

But there is such a gulf of mistrust to overcome. The SDLP says he must have the moral courage to disown violence.

"Everybody knows there is an end to violence coming," says Seamus Mallon. "How many more people have to die before they have the courage to bring it about, how many more people have to go to jail for the best part of their lives before that certainty is brought to fruition?"

While the IRA goes on marking time Mr Adams will continue to promote his confusing message of "vote for peace by voting for us or there'll be Troubles". The words are dove-like but the body language of his postillion flute band points elsewhere.



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Denis Compton

For the love of the games

HAS there ever been a more coruscatingly entertaining, magnetic and all round sportsman than Denis Charles Scott Compton? One who brought sheer joy into both football and cricket, who disdained the banal and the defensive, who actually *enjoyed* his sport?

Best known as a a prolific batsman with an infinity of strokes, the irony is that Compton, who has died aged 78, does not go down as one of the select few honoured by England internationally both at cricket and soccer. This solely because he had the bad luck of having the heart torn out of his career by the war, in which he served with the Army Physical Training Corps, much of the time in India, where he even excelled at rugby.

But 1947 was his summer mirabilis at cricket. It seemed peculiarly appropriate that he should share it with Bill Edrich, his Middlesex "twin" who himself had been a talented outside-left with Tottenham Hotspur. Middlesex romped to the county championship. The batting order of Sid Brown, Jack Robertson, Edrich and Compton built the bridgehead for victory after victory in the County Championship. Both Compton and Edrich scored more than 3,000 runs in the competition, Compton ending the season with 3,816 runs and 18 centuries. Against the South African touring team he scored 753 runs, with four centuries and an average of 94.12.

Compton played soccer 11 times for England during the war, with a Victory International against Scotland in Glasgow in 1946 to boot. But none of these counted as official "caps" so he could not emulate his Middlesex predecessor, that other formidable batsman, Patsy Hendren, who played for England on the left wing at both codes.

Outside-left was always Compton's position on the football field, from the moment he joined Arsenal from the Hampstead club (now Hendon) in 1935. He had a formidably powerful left foot and delighted in ball jugglery. How well one remembers him one afternoon at Chelsea, not long back from India, when he whimsically balanced the ball a few times on his temple, before hooking a perfect centre over his head into the goalmouth. "Heads I Win, says Denis" read the Sunday paper headline next day. He had headed both goals in Arsenal's 2-1 win.

His big brother Leslie had joined Arsenal three years before him but would have to wait until 1946 for a regular place in the League team. Unlike Denis, Leslie — also picked for England in the war, at full-back — would become a full international, but not until 1950 and the age of 38, when he twice played centre-half for England.

Denis was born in north London on May 23, 1918. There was no special athletic tradition in the family; Denis, however, was a prodigy, a Middlesex batsman and an Arsenal First Division player at the age of 18. He had barely passed that birthday when he made his debut for Middlesex against Sussex at Lord's at Whitsun, where he batted at number 11. He did not stay there for long.

A few weeks later he made his first county century and enjoyed so successful a season that there were those who thought that he should have been a member of the Test team G C "Gubby" Allen, the Middlesex skipper, took to Australia on the subsequent MCC tour.

The following September he made his League debut for Arsenal against Derby County, one of 14 appearances that season which produced four goals. As boys, when he and Leslie played blow football, Leslie was always Arsenal while a reluctant Denis was obliged to call himself West Ham United. At Highbury, the other players joked amiably about his cricketing prowess. "Well done, Denis," they would say in the dressing-room at half-time, "but you'd do even better in the second half if you took your pads off."

WHETHER he was playing football or cricket, the essence of Compton's game was sheer enjoyment, which he abundantly communicated. In both sports he was unorthodox to a degree, though never a fault. His unorthodoxy was underpinned by exceptional technique. George Allison, Arsenal's manager when Compton arrived, once cheerfully complained that when he gave Compton advice — which, more journalist then football man, he was scarcely equipped to do — Compton would solemnly reply "Yes, sir", then go out to do exactly what he wanted.

At bat, he delighted in scurrying down the wicket to attack even a good length ball. The sweep to leg was a stroke he had honed to perfection; where others might have run risks he got runs. He was no less effective on the off side, where one of his specialities was to delay his shot before driving the ball square. Another feature was the way he dealt with off-breaks, taking a step backwards to strike the ball, daringly, against the spin. His on-driving was just as powerfully effective.

Unorthodoxy did once become controversy when, playing in a 1946 Test match against India at the Oval, he ran out Vinoo Mankad by using his famed left foot to kick the ball on to the wicket!

A right-handed batsman, he was in fact ambidexterous, bowling slow left arm in a variety of ways. Best known, perhaps, for his "Chinaman" and his googly, he could produce orthodox left-arm spin if required. His bowling was never in the same class as his batting, though on the days when he struck a length it could be formidable.

Altogether, he took 622 first class wickets at an average of 32.22 runs, and 25 Test wickets for an average of 56.40. That last statistic may sound unimpressive but it includes a remarkable five for 70 against South Africa in Cape Town on the 1948/9 MCC tour. His best figures came on the 1946/7 MCC tour of New Zealand against Auckland, when he took seven for 36.

Looking at the statistics, it is curious that, though he made his debut for Arsenal so early and continued to play for them on and off until 1950, he made only 54 League appearances for a mere 15 goals. This is partly accounted for by the intervention of the war, during which he was a regular member of the Arsenal team until posted to India in 1944. He played in the team which won the League South double of championship and cup, helping Arsenal to crush Charlton Athletic 7-1 in the final at Wembley.

Above all he was a member of a brilliant England forward line, made up of Stanley Matthews, Raich Carter, Tommy Lawton, Jimmy Hagan and himself, which would surely have excelled even in official, peacetime, football. It reached its peak when it overwhelmed Scotland 8-0 at Maine Road, Manchester, in 1943. Compton played a large part in that success and in numerous others.

Nor should it be forgotten that he made a huge contribution to Arsenal's winning of the FA Cup in 1950. He scored against Burnley, beaten 2-0 at Highbury, with a typically ferocious left-foot cross-shot and flourished at Wembley in the final against Liverpool. The story goes that he was feeling out of sorts at half-time and Alex James, formerly the hub of Arsenal's pre-war team at inside-left, gave him a glass of brandy to pep him up.

Another reason for Compton's relatively few post-war games for Arsenal — aside from the long winter tours he made with the MCC — was the protracted trouble he had with his right knee. It greatly affected his cricket, too. Arsenal certainly missed his left-wing trickery and especially his coolness from the penalty spot.

Brentford, the west London club, were known for some years as Arsenal's "bogey" team, constantly beating them in League and Cup competition. The jinx was laid to rest at Griffin Park, where Arsenal played Brentford in a wartime League South match in 1944. The Gunners were awarded a penalty for hand-ball. Compton put the ball on the spot, looked up at Brentford's capable Scottish international, John Jackson, said "Pick this one out, John" and scored the only goal of the game. The Evening News dubbed it "The Pity of a Penalty" but, once awarded, there was little doubt that Compton would score it.

The knee inevitably cut down his effectiveness, not only as a batsman but as a dashing fielder, though his co-ordination and athleticism still made him capable of sensational catches. One remembers seeing him play at Lord's in 1942, for a combined Middlesex and Essex team against Kent and Surrey. Godfrey Evans, the celebrated Kent wicket keeper and no mean batsman, pulled a ball high to the boundary. Four runs seemed inevitable but Compton, with a tremendous sprint, reached the ball just in time to catch it on the boundary.

Compton made his Test debut in 1937 against New Zealand, making 65 runs. The following year, when the Australians came to England, he played in four Tests and made 214 runs, with one century, averaging 42.80. He had three Tests and an average of 63, including a century, against the West Indies.

When he returned from India in 1946, Compton had put on a lot of weight and, though he played his Victory International match against Scotland at Hampden, he would never be quite the same footballer again. Much more serious was the knee trouble which, ironically, first afflicted him in the last match of his golden summer of 1947 with Middlesex and England. Previously, he had had a most successful 1946/7 Australian tour: 429 runs for an average of 51.9, with a century in each innings in the Adelaide Test.

Alas, that knee would henceforth never leave him without pain and difficulty. However, it did not stop him in 1948 scoring 145 not out at Old Trafford against Don Bradman's triumphant Australians; even though at one point in his innings he was knocked out by a ball from Ray Lindwall and temporarily had to retire hurt.

THE FOLLOWING winter he went on the MCC South African tour, making an astounding 300 in three hours at Benoni, but 1950 was a grim cricketing year. An operation to take a fragment of bone out of his knee meant that he missed the bulk of it. The kneecap itself would be removed in November 1955 but, with typical resilience, Compton was still batting well enough to make a fine 94 against the Australians the following year. Nor, among his many brilliant innings of the fifties, should we forget his 278 in four hours and 50 minutes against Pakistan.

He would go on playing till the end of the 1957 season, having appeared in 78 Tests, scoring 5,807 runs, with 17 centuries, for an average of 50.06. For many years after the war his handsome face appeared all over Britain in the celebrated Brylcreem advertisements. He wrote a column for the Sunday Express and commented on BBC television.

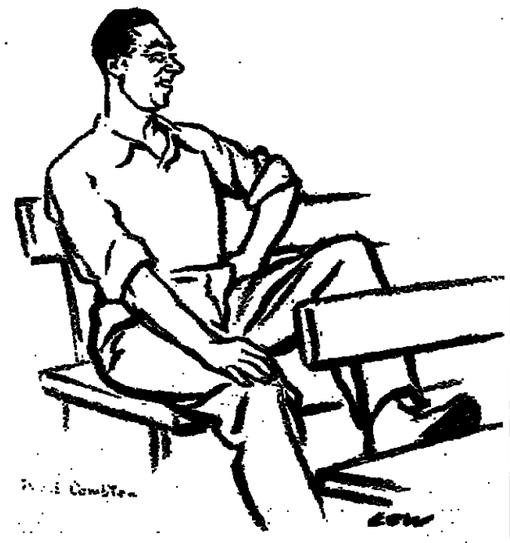
As for his understanding with Leslie, when both played for Arsenal, there was never a better example than in the 1950 FA Cup semi-final against Chelsea at Tottenham. Arsenal, still a goal down near the very end, were given a corner. Leslie came striding upfield from centre-half. Joe Mercer, Arsenal's captain, waved him back. Leslie ignored him. Denis put over the left-wing corner. Leslie headed the equaliser. Arsenal went on to win the Cup.

Brian Glanville

Denis Compton, sportsman, born May 23, 1918; died April 23, 1997

Compton ... 'Whether he was playing football or cricket, the essence of his game was sheer enjoyment, which he abundantly communicated' PHOTOGRAPH: JANE BOWN

Great talisman of gaiety and hope



THE TIMING, impeccable to the last, was poignant. The news came on the morning the cricketers of England were preparing to call "Play!" on the first day of 1997's county championship. Then, one by one, the pavilion flags were lowered to half-mast and young men in cream flannels, who knew him not, stood to attention for a minute because they knew who he was all right, and what he had contributed everlastingly to the innate goodness as well as the grandeur of their game.

Compton was an all-time great and as those standards dipped at Canterbury, Chelmsford, Old Trafford, Trent Bridge and Hove — which in his bonny prime he had sunnily beguiled — bells metaphorically tolled the world over at places happy to accept that team game players can lift spirits by their skill and chivalry.

Because of the drab days he so illuminated, Denis was almost a cultural icon to Britain of the immediate post-war, a valorous talisman of gaiety and of hope. As Chesterton had it: "There is a great man who makes every man feel small. But the really great man is the one that makes every man feel great."

I was always awestruck in the presence of this cigarette-card monarch of my infancy. We last spoke when Alec Bedser won his New Year knighthood. "No doubt about it," said Denis, "Alec was the best medium-pacer I ever saw, and the greatest trier of the lot." And then he added: "Lovely chap, too." There were very few men Denis remembered of whom he would not add: "Lovely chap, too."

We spoke as well that day of the death a few months before of Jack Robertson, the opening batsman who had laid down the markers for the entrance of Compton and Edrich and their string of voluptuous partnerships for Middlesex ("Dear Jack .. lovely chap with it") and Denis at once became croaky and saddened with age. "There are very few of my vintage left any more. The awfulness of age is that every day you wake up and quite expect to hear another lifelong chum has gone ..."

Fifty years ago this week, at his beloved Lord's, he set forth on his summer of summers and scored 73 for MCC against Yorkshire, the champion county. Not that he burst resplendently from the bud after that — his next eight innings brought only 200 runs and one half-century. At the end of May, the sun got up and Middlesex played the touring South Africans. Compton hit 150. He went on to score five more centuries against the tourists, four of them in Tests, altogether smithereening Jack Hobbs's records for a single season, with 3,816 runs and 18 centuries. Both still stand. "I did love the sun on my back," said Denis.

England was still war-cowering and uncertain: scant, skint lives being put back together in monochrome. In glorious Technicolor, Compton's genius — the whistling happy-go-lucky errand-boy, his feet on the handlebars — lightened the load, and on these pages Neville Cardus acclaimed: "Never have I been so deeply touched on a cricket ground as in this heavenly summer of 1947, when I went to Lord's to see a pale-faced crowd, existing on rations, the rocket-bomb still in the ears of most, and see the strain of anxiety and affliction passed from all hearts and shoulders at the sight of Compton in full sail ... each stroke a flick of delight, a propulsion of happy, sane, healthy life. There were no rations in an innings by Compton."

ONE WHO was to follow Cardus here, John Arlott, wrote his first cricket book in that summer of 1947. It ended: "To close the eyes is to see again that easy, happy figure at the wicket, pushing an unruly forelock out of the eye and then, as it falls down again, playing off the wrong foot a stroke which passes deep-point like a bullet ... never again will the boyish delight in hitting a ball with a piece of wood flower directly into charm and gaiety and all the wealth of achievement."

His own favourite innings that year — "probably the most memorable of all, I think" — was for Middlesex against Kent at Lord's, "a run-chase, 390-odd at over 100 an hour; we just failed, but it was such glorious fun going for them." Typical Compo, great good Compo. His 300 in three hours in Benoni, South Africa, was always passed off with a chuckle and "Ooh, great fun". Of his 17 Test match centuries he would not disagree when you said that context was all and best of all was 145 at Old Trafford in 1948, at the beginning of which a bumper from Ray Lindwall ("The greatest I faced; Bill O'Reilly next") had cut his eyebrow — SPLAT! — like a boxer's.

Movietone News next week gave over its whole bulletin to that innings and Leslie Mitchell's evocative dulcets ended the commentary: "Shaky and ill as he must have been, Compton plays like an utter master. Great as Compton is, never has he been greater." Denis would tell how, groggy, he only continued that epic innings after a few slugs of doctor's-orders brandy.

It was apt, too, that yesterday was St George's Day, because, Chesterton again:

St George he was for England
And before he slayed the dragon
He drank a pint of English ale
Out of an English flagon.

Lovely chap, too.

Frank Keating

Death Notices

ADAMS, Linden Elspeth, on April 20th 1997 aged 51 years. A dear daughter of the late Mary and George. Funeral service at Maghull Methodist Church on Monday April 28th at 11.45am followed by committal at Southport Crematorium. Family flowers only please but donations if so desired for Queenscourt Hospice. Donations and further enquiries please to Hunters Funeral Directors, 1268 Burscough Street, Ormskirk, Lancs. L39 2EY. Tel. 01695 572997

BARKER, Edward died in the early hours Friday 18th April at Medway Hospital. A very special and talented man, who will be sadly missed, but not forgotten by his wife Maggie, animals, and many friends. Cremation Monday 28th April, Kensal Green Crematorium, London 3.15pm. Enquiries to Thomas Fowle & Sons, 01634 851133

JENKINS, On 19th April 1997, passed peacefully away at Yeovil Hospital, Flight Lieutenant Henry Frederick (Harry) Jenkins D.F.C. of Dropton Dorset, aged 75 years. A dearly loved husband and sadly missed by all his family and those who knew him. Funeral service will take place on Wednesday 30th April at 2.00pm at Yeovil Crematorium. Family flowers only please, donations if desired for the R.A.F. Benevolent Fund, c/o A. J. Wakely & Sons, Chapel House, Hermitage Street, Crewkerne. Telephone 01460 74547.

MERCHANT, William Moelwyn, professor and retired priest, peacefully on 22nd April 1997 aged 83 years. Dearly loved husband of Lynne, father of Christina and Paul and grandfather to Helena, Owain and Luke. Funeral service at The Mid-Warwickshire Crematorium, Oakley Wood, Nr. Leamington Spa on Monday 28th April at 12.30pm. Family flowers only but if desired donations may be sent to Arden House Residential Home, c/o H.J. Dawson Funeral Directors, 22 George Street, Leamington Spa. A service of thanksgiving for his life and work will be announced at a later date.

In Memoriam

DORRELL, Anthony Michael, 21 September 1923 - 24 April 1987. Still part of us. Daphne, Jane, Alenka, Lara, Harry, Conor, Anthony

Births

FARROW, Maximilian Griffin Mitchell, was born to Annius and Andrew on 18 April 1997

■ To place your announcement telephone 0171 713 4567 or fax 0171 713 4129 between 9am and 3pm Mon-Fri.

Birthdays

Field Marshal Lord Carver, military dissenter, former chief of the Defence Staff, 82; Charlie Chester, comedian, 83; Sir Clement Freud, writer and former MP, 73; Jean-Paul Gaultier, fashion designer, 45; Johnny Griffin, saxophonist, 69; Joe Henderson, jazz musician, 60; Neil Hook, ambassador to Turkmenistan, 52; Shirley Maclaine, actress, 63; Christine Ockrent, journalist and broadcaster, 53; Stuart Pearce, footballer, 36; Lt Gen Sir Hew Pike, deputy commander-in-chief, UK Land Command, 54; Bridget Riley, painter, 66; Martin Seymour-Smith, writer, 69; Mark Shivas, head of films, BBC Television, 59; Christopher Spence, founder and president, London Lighthouse, and his twin brother Peter Spence, screenwriter, 53; Barbra Streisand, actress and singer, 55; Frank Wheeler, ambassador to Chile, 58; John Williams, guitarist, 56; Paula Yates, broadcaster, 37.

General Andrés Rodríguez

Coup for democracy

GENERAL Andrés Rodríguez Pérez, who has died aged 73, was a convivial Paraguayan soldier who turned himself from the principal prop of one of the most parodied military dictatorships in Latin America into a fun-loving democrat who overthrew his father-in-law and put his country back on to the map of the continent from which it had been rubbed off for more than 30 years.

The career and life of President Rodríguez can not be altogether detached from the long rule of his immediate predecessor, General Alfredo Stroessner, whom he faithfully served and whose daughter he married. But his claim to a small place in history comes from the moment in February 1989 when he screwed his courage to the sticking point, with a nod and a wink from the American embassy in Asunción, and moved his tanks to the gates of the presidential palace. After a tense few days of fighting, in which several hundred people were killed, General Stroessner was bundled out of the country to his beach house in Brazil.

General Rodríguez declared that elections would be held and political parties legalised — and that he would be a presidential candidate. He also said that, if he won, he would stand aside four years later, in 1993, a promise he kept. He was replaced in that year by Juan Carlos Wasmosy, the country's first civilian president for nearly half a century.

Rodríguez could afford to be generous. He had become, by that time, one of the richest men in the country. He owned Cambio Guarani (an exchange house as big as any bank), transport firm, airline, brewery and innumerable large cattle estancias. He also had other sources of income, larger and more dubious.

He was endlessly accused of using the Paraguayan armed forces' operations against the drugs trade as a cover for participating in the trade himself — his position as a senator-for-life in the 1990s gave him immunity from police or parliamentary investigation. Like other Paraguayan drug barons, he built himself a vast and tasteless home, in his case an almost exact model of the chateau at Fontainebleau. Not bad for the son of an impoverished farmer.

Rodríguez . . . putting his country back on the map

Rodríguez had a conventional military career — attending military college in 1946 and going on to command the first army corps in 1982 — in a country that gives considerable respect to its armed forces. But this asset, which sustained the Stroessner dictatorship (established in 1954) for many years, had been whittled away by the 1980s. Corruption and mindless brutality, coupled with the arrogant one-party rule of the Colorado Party, led to the coup of 1989. It was designed to head off a possible post-Stroessner regime that might have been considerably more radical.

Unlike other Latin American military dictatorships of the same period, Stroessner's regime had relied heavily on the political support of the Colorado Party. Rodríguez's coup was designed not so much to defend the privileges of the armed forces as to protect the jobs and life-style of a vast legion of civilian bureaucrats, hangers-on and placemen, who made up the party's membership of more than a million. With American encouragement, he presented himself as a modern-minded democrat who would put an end to the human-rights abuses, notably the use of torture and the lack of press freedom, for which the country was internationally infamous (and to which the US had long turned a blind eye).

Most Paraguayans gave thanks for a reprieve from the long years of stifling dictatorship but none were happier than the Colorados, who perceived correctly that Rodríguez had preserved their privileged position.

In his last years, he liked to present himself as a benign father of the nation, and he took credit for Paraguay's adherence to the regional trade bloc, Mercosur, dominated by Brazil and Argentina, that turned Paraguay from a smugglers' paradise into a lawful international trading partner.

Richard Gott

Andrés Rodríguez, politician, born June 1923; died April 21, 1997

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Making the best of it

Labour comes back fighting, and rightly so

YESTERDAY'S Guardian-ICM poll was not a rogue, even though last night's polls from other companies seemed to suggest that Labour's lead is holding up more strongly than the five-point margin we reported in yesterday's edition. That five-point lead remains a genuine piece of evidence of a traceable and continuous pattern that shows the gap between Labour and Conservatives has been narrowing for some days. It broadly reflects the findings of our focus group studies at grass-roots level among undecided voters in marginal constituencies, and it has been supported by a number of other surveys, including last night's Gallup-Channel 4 poll, which reported that millions of voters remain undecided with a week still to go.

That evidence, and the dramatic change since last week, provided an overdue shock to the many who believed that the victory of a new government on May 1 would be a foregone conclusion. Many readers will have woken up yesterday to an unpleasant surprise and to their most worrying day of the campaign so far. We apologise for causing any such distress, but not for being the bearer of awkward tidings. It was our job to tell it as we found it, not to tailor the coverage to suit the opposition parties. And, in any event, the poll was a useful reminder all round that this election will not fall effortlessly into Labour's waiting lap next week. It still needs to be won.

Labour responded to yesterday's Guardian-ICM poll just as most of its supporters would have hoped and in a manner reminiscent of Susie Orbach's supposed advice to Princess Diana to see every setback as an opportunity. The best way to deal with a fall in the poll lead, whether it is a slow and steady fall or a sharp and dramatic one, is to come back strongly, composed and positive, stressing the essential differences between the parties and compelling the voters to face the choice which is on offer. Labour's response yesterday was all of this. New policy proposals were put forward on the lottery. Mr Blair made another upbeat and confident set of appearances while John Major appeared suddenly rather adrift from the main focus of the action. The party concentrated on essentials. There was none of the jitteriness and improvisation which marked the earlier clashes on privatisation and spending totals in the first days of the campaign. This was a much better response.

It is easy to criticise Labour's tendency towards rigid discipline, and the criticism is often justified. But there is a time and a place for everything and we are in the middle of a campaign which, whatever its defects, will determine the future of the country. It is a tense time, when everyone is under pressure to do the right thing and not to make stupid and expensive mistakes. At times like this, the discipline and unison which was revealed in the leaked Labour War Book last night becomes necessary and not optional. Labour's leaked document may contain admissions which the party would prefer not to see publicised, but a careful reading of the whole of it induces admiration for its thoroughness and focus, rather than indignation at its recognition that the Conservatives have some things going for them in the campaign. The fact that the Tories are strong campaigners with policies and leaders which appeal to many voters ought to come as no surprise. Many people nevertheless seem to need to be reminded of it. With a week to go, this is developing into the serious contest that was bound to emerge eventually. At such a time, a bit of discipline is hardly out of place. Labour, faced with a dicey moment, handled it well yesterday and can now raise the stakes as the last week beckons.

A brutal end to the Lima siege

Peru must now start addressing its severe social problems

THE OPERATION against the Tupac Amaru guerrillas in Lima has been a success in its own terms. Such crises generate their own extreme logic: "revolutionary violence", as the hostage-takers must have more than half-expected, has led to a counter-revolutionary response. The hostages and their families are overjoyed; public opinion is relieved and President Alberto Fujimori is flushed with pride. But that is not the end of the story.

From the storming of the London Iranian embassy onwards, the circumstances of these incidents leave difficult questions to answer. Did Mr Fujimori, who had always favoured an armed outcome, frustrate a peaceful solution? Perhaps there was still a faint chance, yet the intermediaries in the negotiations believed that positions had hardened rather than weakened. Neither side acknowledged a culture of compromise which might have avoided the final bloodshed. Could the lives of some of the rebels have been saved, whether or not — as is claimed by a guerrilla outside the embassy — four of them actually attempted to surrender? In theory the government could have tried to spare them: strategic reasoning in a knife-edge operation meant that no one was given a chance. We can feel distaste at these aspects, but once the operation had been launched they were a brutally inescapable part of it.

The Tupac Amaru and their sympathisers need to ask themselves some hard questions too. They acted as a vanguard in the unhappy tradition of the revolutionary "foco" which was championed — fatally in his own case — by Che Guevara. Even allowing for a uniformly hostile Peruvian press, they do not seem to have gained a significant measure of popular support. Internal splits weakened the appeal of a group without a clearly defined ideology, and occasional acts of terrorism blurred their difference from the more ruthless Sendero Luminoso.

None of this diminishes the strength of the guerrillas' case in drawing attention to the inhuman conditions suffered by those in prison — including many entirely innocent of terrorist conduct who have been sentenced by military tribunals with hooded judges. Human Rights Watch speaks of up to a thousand sentenced to decades of imprisonment in life-threatening conditions — a situation tacitly admitted by the government whose special review panel has now overturned some convictions. This can indeed be described as terrorism by the state. Nor does Mr Fujimori have a satisfactory answer to the banner denouncing poverty which the guerrillas hung over the Japanese embassy in Lima. With nearly half the population below the line, and one-fifth not able to eat properly, it is not enough to rely on "trickle down" policies or hopeful talk of the Peruvian economy matching that of neighbouring Chile. Long after the memory of the embassy siege fades, the misery of the unremembered millions will continue.

Turn right for William Hill

A road by any other name would sell as sweetly

A TOWN'S place in history can often be defined by the names of its streets. You didn't need to be a brilliant Kremlinologist to have realised that something was afoot when the Stalin-inspired Gorky Street was changed — or changed back — to Tver Street. A similar fate awaited the Ho Chi Minh Strasse. It is easy to understand why Bombay recently changed Victoria Gardens to a vernacular name and even why George III insisted on Princes' Street in Edinburgh being named after his sons rather than, as was intended, St Giles Street which reminded him of a London slum. It's less easy to grasp why Homer City council in the US recently changed Elderberry Court to Raspberry Court but, rest assured, historians will find something meaningful to say.

In Britain we are used to street names in some boroughs being a barometer of political correctness. (There are, one suspects, fewer Winnie Mandela Drives than there were a few years ago) but now we will have to get used to the new *economic* correctness. This week Yeovil is pioneering an idea which is expected to sweep the country: sponsored street names. This promises to be manna from heaven for cash-strapped councils unable to afford to improve their infrastructure. The first of these has the name "Somerfield" placed discreetly before West Dyke Road. However, it may only be a matter of time before the road name itself is quietly dropped to accomodate companies that were born to be street names. Like Safe Way, William Hill, Selhurst Park, Brixton Estate and BritishAir Way. We have enough Spencer Roads to ensure that no one would quibble at Marks & Spencer Road. And who would notice if Grove Securities suddenly became Securities Grove? No price is too high these days to achieve the right corporate street-cred.

Letters to the Editor

The bombs that hit home

DANCE with the devil and you pay the price. The British government agencies that made a cosy deal with the IRA, giving them "codes" to authenticate their bomb warnings, really should now explain to the rest of us why this *modus vivendi* is the right way to combat terrorism (Ban the bomb chaos, April 23). Furthermore, whatever agency supplied the codes should reveal just what they gave (or promised) the terrorists in return. The chaos induced by recent hoax bomb threats, "authenticated" by government-supplied codes, should make the folly of these deals apparent even to the practitioners of accommodation.

The airlines learned long ago that most telephoned threats are hoaxes and virtually all are ignored, as they should be; there is no known case of a terrorist warning being given before an actual aircraft bombing attempt. In any case, those who kill innocent people to make a political statement should have to face the death penalty for murder. The law in this country would permit even the agents who killed 270 people on Pan Am 103 at Lockerbie to escape appropriate punishment for that atrocity.

Publicly reacting to telephoned terrorist threats simply gives those terrorists a superb weapon: a risk-free way to produce expensive chaos. Ignoring telephone threats would take one weapon away from the terrorists; reinstating the death penalty for murder would give the security forces a sorely needed weapon to use against them.

I make these suggestions from an informed background. I have been an airline pilot for 30 years; I am accustomed to operating in the face of telephoned threats. The Libyan government's stated preference for having the two agents indicted for the Pan Am 103 bombing tried in Scotland instead of the US, even though not sincere, makes a point. The UK has no death penalty; the US does. That alone should be proof of the deterrent value of the death penalty.

I admit I am not impartial; my wife was killed at Lockerbie on board Pan Am 103.
Bruce M Smith.
Malthouse Cottage,
Church Lane,
Bray, Berks SL6 2AF.

IT WAS with despair that I read Richard Clutterbuck's argument advocating that the decision to proceed into an area where a bomb threat has been made should be left to the "informed" individual. The disruption caused by IRA bomb scares should not be seen as an acceptable inconvenience, but as a political problem which demands resolution. The public do not want to "take the risk" but to go about their daily lives free from the threat of death.

The cost of the failure to guarantee the public's safety when there is a bomb scare is not, as Dr Cluterbuck believes, that a "small number of irresponsible and predatory lawyers" will seek to make money, but is counted in human lives. The failure of the police to evacuate Victoria station in 1991 left one family fatherless and dozens of people injured — including my brother.
Name and address supplied.

We do not publish letters where only an e-mail address is supplied; please include a full postal address. We may edit letters: shorter ones are preferred. We regret we cannot acknowledge those not used.

Please spare our blushes when the polls are poles apart

FOR the past few weeks your paper has offered the best, wittiest and most objective reporting of the election campaign. Then along comes one roguish opinion poll (Guardian/ICM survey, April 23) and you bombard us with an overblown, over-the-top reaction which would make even your average Daily Mail reader blush.

You talk of the "election race being blown wide open" and of "shock waves" being sent out (did someone buy your reporters The Mirror Big Book of Tabloid Clichés for Christmas?), and yet in the same report you tell us that the latest Gallup poll shows Labour increasing its lead by 5 per cent to 21 per cent.

Surely a more objective analysis would show that, although both these polls appear somewhat off the mark, the average Labour lead they show between them (13 per cent) is more or less in line with the trend over the campaign?

Please calm down. If ICM conducts another survey for you and it shows, say, a Labour lead of 12 per cent (in line with ICM's earlier polls, and highlighting the suspicion that April 22's was a rogue), will you run on headlines such as "Massive surge for Labour", or will you come clean and apologise for this week's hysteria?
David Simpson.
11 Melrose Terrace,
East Mains,
East Kilbride G74 4EQ.

YOUR report of the most recent poll by ICM continues to stress the importance of the statistical adjustments carried out to the raw data to compensate for "shy" Conservatives and cites these as advantages over unadjusted polls such as those from MORI and Gallup. Yet it has been clear for some time that your adjusted and unadjusted figures have been converging; in yesterday's poll adjustment makes no difference at all to the Labour voting intention and adds only 1 per cent to the Conservatives.

It follows, therefore, that such adjustments cannot explain the differences between ICM polls and those of other organisations. Nor can they be explained by the use of telephone, as the biggest differences are with Gallup which also uses telephones (and better sampling).

This convergence also serves to undermine the theory behind the ICM adjustments — the so-called "spiral of silence" effect. For if this were true, we should have been seeing exactly the opposite (that is, growing *divergence* between adjusted and unadjusted figures) over the last few months.
Iain Noble.
Hound Dog Research,
60a St John's Grove,
London N19 5RP.

LIKE the BBC's election-night poll of 1992, a "prediction" constantly adjusted based on each successive turn of events is not worthy of the name — it inevitably proves correct eventually. The Guardian has confidently predicted a Labour victory for months. You might have salvaged some credibility had you kept to that line now rather than frantically hedged your bets.

If, as many of us with '92 still fresh in the mind have predicted all along, the supposedly vast Labour support evaporates come polling day, I hope you will concede that you, in your servility to discredited opinion polls, have failed embarrassingly as political commentators.
Charles Rowlands.
64 Ridge Road,
London N8 9LH.

HAS the ICM poll been adjusted to account for electors too embarrassed to say they will vote Labour?
Paul Whibley.
26 Whorlton Road,
London SE15 3PD.

Island history

A VERY junior member of the Colonial Office almost 50 years ago, I was intrigued to read (St Helena says Britain withdrew rights illegally, April 21) that Mr Justice Hancox has opined that the royal charter of 1673 says that the islanders should enjoy all liberties as if they had been born in England — and that, although St Helena was always presumed to be a colony, it never was one in fact.

Does this mean that the Colonial Office should never have dealt with the island, and that she should never have received grants under the post-war Colonial Development and Welfare Act?

I should add that CO officials were always most sympathetic to the island's needs, and that the eccentric assistant-secretary responsible in the 1950s insisted on dealing with St Helena whatever geographical department he belonged to, much to the confusion of the Public Record Office.
Kenneth Clark.
48 Hardy Road,
London SE3 7NN.

YOU are mistaken in thinking that the people of St Helena lost their right of abode in Britain because of legislation in the early 1980s. They lost it far earlier. So did the people of Hong Kong.

I studied intensively the legislation you mention, wondering what was the point of it, since it actually took the right of abode from extremely few people in the Commonwealth.

I concluded that Hong Kong was indeed the point of this legislation. Mrs Thatcher wished to give the impression that she was saving Britain from being "swamped" by the yellow hordes by depriving them of their right of abode. But they didn't possess it — they hadn't done for 20 years.
Mary Paye.
Flat 1,
Coldharbour House,
Gadswell Close,
Watford WD2 4TX.

No votes abroad, by jingo

NICK Harris of the Hokkaido Shimbun (Letters, April 23) should not be surprised at the high-handed attitude of the Conservatives and Labour towards the foreign media. My organisation has asked Mr Blair three times for an interview since he became party leader. The answer from his office was either "No" or "Wait until after the election". As for Robin Cook, with pretensions to the post of Foreign Secretary, he doesn't even answer letters.

There are no votes in the foreign media and we who work for them must accept that. But most British politicians remain brazenly arrogant towards, and ignorant of, foreign affairs and the impact their general jingoism has on foreign audiences.
Jack Thompson.
News presenter, Deutsche Welle TV International.
Voltastrasse 6, Berlin.

A nation in denial over drugs

I KNOW, like Janine Woolford (Coming clean, G2 April 21, and Letters, April 15), that no one really cares about my son. He is 20 years old and a heroin addict. Last year his girlfriend died from an overdose.

He too has tried very hard to "get off". He had his two weeks' de-tox, his methadone script, and, after a lot of pressure, admission to a re-hab unit (the cheapest we could find). He tried for three weeks to endure the continuous humiliation and confrontation they put him through. He walked out last week. So that's it then, as far as the GP and social services are concerned.

Are we all in denial as a society? Our prisons are full of alcoholics and drug addicts. Yet all the politicians can say is: we'll lock more up. Dr Froggett, who advised Margaret Thatcher on health-service issues, was himself a heroin addict; although disgraced he was not imprisoned (nor should he be), but why is there one rule for those in positions of power and another for people like my son and Mrs Woolford's?

Meanwhile the breweries sell their child-oriented alcoholic pop drinks, and the tobacco companies perpetuate their "smoking is cool" image. While my son — indeed, all the sons (and daughters) of this society which lives in denial — are left to battle their illness in whichever way they can.
Name and address supplied.

The colour purple

GIVEN Tony Blair's regular attendance at Mass, I am surprised he has not twigged the wider meaning of the colour purple. Not only was it reserved for the use of Roman emperors — presumably the association desired — but it is the liturgical colour for the penitential seasons, and is often the mourning colour. Someone has blundered.
Hugh Adams.
16 Marlborough Hill Place,
Kingsdown, Bristol BS2 8LR.

THE last person to use purple as the colour of authority was David Icke. It turned out to be a blunder of David James proportions, and I don't want the boy Tony to blow his chance of becoming England's No 1, particularly with Europe beckoning.
J G Woollard.
5 Lingmell Courtyard,
Gosforth Road,
Seascale, Cumbria CA20 1HQ.

RED is not universally the colour of European centre-left parties (Leader, April 22). In France red is reserved for communists: socialists have pink. Italy's Olive Tree coalition used green. Labour is in fact following Unison, whose logo incorporates purple. In this respect at least the union link is alive and well.
Craig Nelson.
11 Baden-Powell Road,
Nottingham NG2 4GA.

Stock response to crime

BEA Campbell (It's the poor wot gets the responsibility, April 22) is the latest Guardian writer to comment on my pamphlet The Self Policing Society without showing any sign of having read it. Bea repeats the accusation that Demos "scandalously" proposed a return to the stocks. In fact I wrote that "a radical and disquieting suggestion would be to return to a latter day form of stocks, although it would generate huge resentment and possibly foster even more violence." We need to respond to legitimate concern about crime with new community-based punishments rather than putting more people in prison. Bea would prefer we stick our heads in the sand.
Charles Leadbeater.
Demos,
9 Bridewell Place,
London EC4V 6AP.

A Country Diary

LOCH FARR: By road the loch is only two miles from the house, and as I have been retired for some time it means I can go on to the water as the weather dictates. With temperatures dropping below freezing overnight, mid-April seems too early for trout fishing, but this is what the locals call an "early loch", in that it fishes better early in the season. I am still not clear whether this is because of the habits of the fish, or the fact that fishing is more difficult later in the year because extensive beds of aquatic plants make fly-fishing fraught with problems. Two sets of call notes dominated the background sounds all the time I was on the loch; the first was from a willow warbler — the first of the year for me — and the second was a toad. The toads seemed all over the loch, indicating it must be a very large colony indeed, which is unusual in the Highlands. Loch Farr is also one of a small number of places this far north where you get both toads and frogs spawning. The boat needed a lot of bailing out, and as I eventually took grip of the heavy oars I wondered if I would be fit enough this year to row the length of the loch without stopping. By mid-morning the loch was absolutely dead calm and there were fish rising everywhere — some dimpling the water, while others jumped right out and splashed back down. I have never seen so many fish rising in any of the other lochs I have fished in the Highlands. Needless to say, I was catching no fish, and did not do so until a breeze created the right ripple and the sun went in, and then I took some small but takeable fish, enough for dinner that evening — when that fresh, they have a taste all their own. The water on the loch is controlled by a sluice, and the level was much higher than usual because the owner had commissioned an artist to do a painting of the scene, and she thought it would look better with more water.

RAY COLLIER

Diary

Dan Glaister

AFTER a lengthy and unwarranted absence, it is time to welcome back Neil Hamilton to this column. We have already read Wee Neil's exploits in student journalism at the Feudal Times and Reactionary Herald, but now we travel further back in time, to the days when Wee Neil was not yet fully formed. We join him at the Aman Valley Grammar School, Ammanford, Carmarthenshire, where Neilette, as treasurer of the Photographic Society, was already nurturing the leadership potential that would serve him in later life. The summer 1966 issue of the school magazine features an intriguing photograph of the cast for that term's play, A Letter From The General. Never one to miss the chance to dress up in a uniform, hiding in the back row parting hidden by a rather fetching peaked cap, stands Neilette. But the highlight comes in the poetry section with Satan's Neighbours, an early foray into rhyme from Neil Hamilton, 6b. "Down in the dark and dusty seams beneath/ The lush green grass and black slagheaps," writes Neilette, "There strive in satanic tunnels deep/Hardy blackened souls . . ." Then fall goes blank: "Winding, twisting, turning/Ever-onward, kneeling, crawling,/ Sweating, groaning, axe in hand." It's tough down in that there Lobby, by 'eck.

NOT that the Diary is one to snitch, but alarming news arrives: officers of the law are being encouraged to break the law. Shocking stuff, you'll agree. The latest initiative from the Met is Right Line, an anonymous phone line for officers to shop their near and dear colleagues. "I am concerned," Sergeant Bob Aird writes to The Job magazine. "The discipline code clearly states an offence is committed where a member of the police force makes an anonymous communication to any other police authority, or any other member of the police force." Nick, nick.

MORE news of the charming antics of Dr Julian Lewis, Conservative candidate for New Forest East. The Question Time format at a recent Friends of the Earth meeting in his constituency was not to Dr Lewis's liking. "I've been set up," he blustered. "I was warned about people like you." True to form, the good doctor proceeded to behave in an objectionable and abusive manner throughout the meeting, culminating in a strutant and aggressive display in the car park, reportedly threatening a female member of the audience. Was he not ashamed of his behaviour? "I don't really care," he declared, "there's not enough of you to make a difference." Dr Lewis inherited a notional majority of 11,348.

A NOVEL idea for struggling magazines from The Nation, a North American cousin of the New Statesman. Faced with a cashflow crisis, The Nation has stopped short at downsizing and instead identified a new source of revenue. Join the quaintly titled "Legacy Group", schmoozes a brochure, and help to ensure the survival of The Nation beyond your own survival. "A special way to make sure The Nation is always there." Perhaps the lesson could be extended beyond magazines to newspapers. Surely the Telegraph, with its perennial problems of an ageing and in some cases dying readership, could benefit. Bulk sales to the sky.

AN explanation arrives for the aquatic residence of Charles Pope, Referendum Party candidate for Penrith and the Borders. Mr Pope, sharp-eyed readers will recall, states that his home is in Ullswater. Why should he live in a lake? He is a former submarine captain. Down periscope.

KEEP an eye — or at least a dilated pupil — out for unscheduled trips to the loo in tomorrow's edition of Have I Got News For You. The programme will feature bonzo journo and writer Will Self, the latest effort to raise his profile as he gears up for the publication of a new oeuvre next week. Ah.

Murdoch chameleons look very unhappy

Commentary

Hugo Young

THE Daily Telegraph is having a terrific election. Its ancestral juices are working overtime. It is a Conservative paper and, by God, we know it. I say that without irony, still less sarcasm. Although the Telegraph has attacked John Major relentlessly over the years, it sees nothing wrong with supporting him now, given the choices on offer. Major's weakness in face of the Euro-sceptic tide makes the cross-over easier, since the party is now owned by the Telegraph Tendency. But Charles Moore, the editor, makes no bones about his allegiance. Yesterday, he buried his own poll, which showed Labour still 21 points ahead, in favour of the sensational Guardian version, which supported the splashy headline "Labour lead collapses".

The Sun, by contrast, is having a terrible election. After selling its soul to the most commercial bidder, it doesn't know where it stands. The proprietor's instruction to support Tony Blair is being obeyed without a trace of tabloid élan. The attack journalism of 1992, which helped destroy Neil Kinnock, is hammering only half-hearted nails into Major's coffin. You can tell the Sun doesn't really mean it. The paper is conflicted. While backing Blair in general, it opposes two of his more conspicuous commitments — getting closer to the EU, and giving more recognition to trade unions — and snarls regularly to that effect.

The Labour Party set great store by the Sun's support, and Blair paid regular court to Rupert Murdoch, but the gains have been negative and the costs will come later. Having aligned itself with one of the most odious cultural enemies of a better, more decent, more communitarian Britain, Labour is already on notice that the friendship will not last. Of the many things that Mr Blair says will be different after the election, the return of the Sun to attacking rancorously almost everything he wants to do must be high on the list.

All papers, even Murdoch's, have some kind of core identity, and breaking with it can be a counter-productive gesture, confusing to readers and liable to take the guts out of the journalism. All the Sun has responded to is the commercial judgment of a distant owner, thereby diluting such integrity as it had. For the Sun to support the Labour Party is a Big, and decidedly transient, Lie.

Will the same be true of Murdoch's other daily property? The Times is engaged on an elaborate and portentous bid to look totally independent. It has gone to some lengths to present objective accounts of the parties' positions, and its coverage has been pretty even-handed, once one has ploughed past pictures of its writers so numerous that they greatly exceed those of the politicians. There are even rumours that all this solemn self-regard might conclude with an endorsement for the Labour Party.

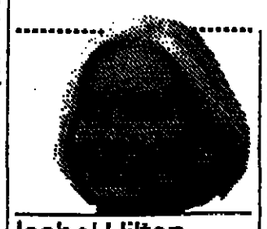
If that happens, it will not, of course, swing a single seat. Leading articles never do. In all papers, the leaders say everything about the paper but nothing about the election result. The Times, however, will have exactly the same problem as the Sun. In its heart, it's a Conservative paper. The fact that it has consistently attacked Mr Major from the right, often in the most vicious terms, doesn't make that any less true, and would only make less credible any support it finally decided to hand to Mr Blair. It opposes him on the unions, attacks his constitutional plans and is, if anything, even more fanatically opposed to a rapprochement with the EU than is the Telegraph.

SO IT, too, will be seen as merely opportunist. It will not be speaking from its soul but playing to fashion, the better to wrap itself in a bogus reputation for independent judgment. Labour should regard any Times endorsement with the gravest suspicion, its main function being to supply a platform of supposed objectivity from which to mount attacks on the policies of the next government that might *not* sound so good if they came from a Tory-supporting paper, or from one whose Euro-phobia dovetails geometrically with the commercial interests of a proprietor who wants the EU off his back.

The ceaseless quest for objective truth is the basis of all credible reporting, and is never perfectly satisfied. Everyone knows the soul of the Guardian lies where it always has done, on the centre-left. We hope our reporting aspires towards a proper objectivity, though there are Labour and Lib Dem propagandists who tell us otherwise every day of the week. But the readers know what they are getting. There's no pretence to another kind of soul.

Nor is there at the Telegraph. Roy Greenslade pointed out, earlier in the campaign, some of the defacements of truth this has led to. But the point is that the Telegraph is being true to itself. You know where you are with it. It is prepared to back a loser, because its very nature demands that, in present circumstances, that is what it has to do. Changing one's mind about issues is all very well, but slipping on an entire new identity demands rather more justification than the convenience of the moment, if it is not to seem as discardable as an old raincoat. If the logic of this argument would leave Labour with a press that's loaded against it, so be it. That's the unaltered truth about the ownership and direction of these newspapers, and both journalism and politics would be better without the illusions of convenience, as insincere as they are unreliable, that say otherwise.

Slaying dragons is going out of fashion



Isabel Hilton

THEY celebrated St George's Day in Salisbury this week. It was a family affair — a procession of mediaeval knights, St George and the Dragon drawn in chalk by schoolchildren on a pedestrianised city-centre street and a *son et lumière* show on the scaffold-clad west end of the cathedral.

Salisbury is a supremely English town — the cathedral houses a copy of that record of the 13th-century tax revolt, the Magna Carta, remembered as the founding document of English liberties. And the Englishness they celebrated this week had the merit, at least, of being at the expense of nothing but the modern world.

It was a heritage Englishness, an Englishness of knights and ladies, of country lanes and roast beef. By comparison to some of the national images on view this week, it had, to put it no higher, the distinction of commemorating the English patron saint without having to stamp on the national sensibilities of others.

Perhaps it is the prerogative of national patron saints to receive their tribute in a haze of heritage mummery. This is the invented England of the tourist board, the England of Beatrix Potter meets the barons. It's a volkish summertime of wenches in laced bodices and hay ricks, the complete St George experience. It's harmless on the streets of Salisbury. The damage comes when it seeps into the contemporary political debate.

The English, of course, are not the only British nation infected with a nostalgic national myth: the Scots have what one critic last week called the sub-Wallace fantasy, the Welsh their bardic imaginings. But where the Scots, at least, have scored in recent decades is in the ability to clothe their mediaeval imagery in the garb of a modern political idea. It doesn't matter whether you agree with it, but it is important that the Scots can imagine themselves as the Scottish Nationalists do, an independent social democracy within the European Union — St Andrew in a suit, with his marron passport in his top pocket and a lap-top in his briefcase. To decide if you want it or not, you first have to be able to imagine it and not feel diminished by the act. It's not yet a picture that comes easily to St George.

The English are being urged to don their armour again, to do battle with the foreigner, be he Spanish fisherman or Brussels bureaucrat. But in the England that I have been visiting in the last three weeks, the mood is more subdued, the mediaeval fantasy properly contained within the jumble of marketed images we all carry in our heads. Any number of them can evoke a passing emotion but they are too far removed from the realities of life to be taken seriously.

In the child's cartoon, the land ravaged by dragons is a dark and fearsome place. When the beast is slain, the sun comes out, the birds resume their song and the harvest is safely gathered in. But out in day-to-day England, the dragons are in the benefit offices and the hospital waiting rooms, the old people's homes and the pollution in the congested streets. They are subtle, amorphous creatures that rarely roar but gnaw away at a landscape that has lost its shape. And though the dragons' presence is felt, I detect little faith in this England that the knights who offer their services can slay them.

And perhaps slaying dragons is not really the business of contemporary politics anyway. The guardians of Salisbury Cathedral have a more pragmatic approach to their share of the English heritage: a few years ago they hit on the idea of selling facsimiles of the Magna Carta to raise funds for their building, and a plaque inside the cathedral records the generosity of the European Commission in 1989 in the repair of its 14th-century spire. The east window was made in 1980 by a glass-maker in Chartres and is dedicated to prisoners of conscience.

CONTEMPORARY dragons recognise no national boundaries in their destructive vocation and no national knight, however heroic, is likely to prevail against them. Perhaps St George should retrain: a course in communication skills and new technology, an evening class in economics, an away-day on the arts of diplomacy and a month at Berlitz would be a start.

But before he does that, he might like to reflect on a more personal problem: he was obviously once a chap with altruistic impulses, albeit of a kind that might nowadays be thought a touch laddish and paternalistic. Where did it go wrong? What turned him into the playground bully? It's time he took off that silly metal helmet and looked himself — and us — in the eye. It's time, in short, he grew up. Nobody would think any the less of him for it. In fact he might find himself with a happier social life — invitations on the mantlepiece, that sort of thing — if he pensioned off the charger and learned to leave the lance behind when he came to call.

Those of us who choose not to vote, argues **Natasha Walter**, need not be ashamed: with so many disaffected with mainstream politics, it has become a valid response

Don't vote, don't care

A FRIEND of mine yelled at me last week: "What do you mean, you're not going to vote? Your grandmothers fought on the streets for your right to vote." This is true; our ancestors, male and female, indeed fought long and hard for that right. But are those who choose not to vote actually irresponsible and apathetic? Or are we making a valid choice?

According to research by Mori this month, the number of people who say they are certain to vote has declined by nearly 10 per cent since the 1992 election. That means 30 per cent of voters could be staying at home this time around. Yet in the eyes of most of the media, people who fail to vote do not exist. Take yesterday's front-page story, sourced to ICM, that "Labour is now on 42 per cent and the Conservatives on 37 per cent". Well, no. If you take *all* the respondents ICM spoke to, not merely those who gave their voting intentions, Labour are now on 27 per cent, Tories on 23 per cent, and 36 per cent of those asked did not reveal their intentions. Some of those latter people will vote, but many will not; no party stands to get 42 per cent of the British people's support.

Certainly, the right to say yes is an important right. But so is the right to say no. Perhaps we now need the opportunity to cast a "No" vote, in order to make visible the millions of people who choose not to vote.

Such an idea, the possibility that one might not vote this election, is being voiced with increased frequency because of the undeniable fact, admitted almost everywhere, that it is becoming harder and harder to spot the difference between the two main parties. Now that each has signed up to the same broad economic and social policies — similar taxation levels, similar investment in the welfare state, similar ideas on pensions or law and order or privatisation — it is difficult to feel that we have a real choice. Just as boredom and cynicism are causing thousands of people to turn off the news programmes, so thousands will stay away from the polling booths.

There was a moment, when Tony Blair became Labour leader, when it seemed as though political debate was going to crack open. We thought we were going to hear a new discourse in which the issues that mattered — democracy, combating inequality, a new kind of welfare state — were going to be aired again. Now, that hope has died. When you see ordinary pensioners and unemployed people confronting Harriet Harman and Peter Lilley on Newsnight, you see both politicians skittering away from the real needs those questioners are expressing. They are mired in a language of soundbites and rhetoric that has failed to connect to those people's lives.

Young people, fresh to the political debate, are particularly alienated by its distance from everyday life. Just 32 per cent of voters under 25 now say they are absolutely certain to vote, compared to 82 per cent of voters over 65, according to further ICM figures this week. Their blatant indifference to the election — even more striking in the case of young black voters — should not be shrugged aside.

There are too many issues, that matter to too many people, that have not been aired in this election. Yes, we hear about Europe. Yes, we hear about sleaze. Yes, we hear about John Major's and Tony Blair's characters. But no, we do not hear about the one in three children growing up in poverty.

NO, WE do not hear about how over-reliance on the car is destroying urban and rural life. No, we do not hear about British involvement in the arms trade. No, we do not hear about equal political representation for women and black people. The media and the politicians are in this together; the politicians stick to the issues in the manifesto; the interviewers stick to those plus sleaze. No wonder people are switching off and staying home.

But the reason why some of us do not vote is bigger than issues of cynicism and alienation. We also feel our political system is a travesty of real democracy. Above all, we know most of our votes — especially for smaller parties — are votes thrown away. Until we have proportional representation, we will not have a Parliament that even roughly represents the real patterns of allegiance in Britain.

The day we vote is not the day when we act as responsible citizens, but the day when most of us abdicate all responsibility. We vote the politicians in, and then we sit back while they do as they please for five years — lie to us, hide things from us, pass laws that we do not need, raise taxes for activities we do not want. Why should we acquiesce in such unfettered power? If we had proportional representation, a freedom of information act, referenda for renewed mandates as policies changed, and, above all, a freer and more honest political debate — then perhaps voting would be worthwhile. But until we have a stake in our Parliament, why should we legitimate its activities?

Shock news at Broadmoor

The special hospital is doing rather well, actually. So why haven't we heard, asks **David Brindle**? Doesn't that fit our myths?

REST assured that Broadmoor hospital is not out of control. It is not being run by the patients' council, there have been no substantial seizures of drugs and there is no evidence of a child-pornography ring.

This needs making clear because the official inquiry which came to these conclusions has attracted little attention since it reported earlier this week. In stark contrast, the original allegations about the Berkshire special hospital triggered a huge wave of interest.

The "specials" occupy a peculiar place in the national consciousness. Home to many of those guilty of the most horrific crimes — although also to some guilty of no crimes — the high-security hospitals hold a morbid fascination.

It appeals to our prejudice to be told, in the words of the cliché, that "the lunatics have taken over the asylum": that liberalising the old custodial regime has played into the hands of the patients; that killers and rapists, blessed with animal cunning, are running rings round helpless staff; and that therapeutic care is wasted on psychopaths who are beyond treatment and should be hanged up for life.

When we are confronted with the converse of this — that the specials can be reformed and that some of the most "evil" members of society do respond to a more constructive approach to their incarceration — we are strangely discomforted.

As often before, the latest scare about Broadmoor was fuelled by the Prison Officers' Association, a trade union wedded to a custodial approach to care that has been losing its powerful grip on the specials. Credulous media were drip-fed salacious accounts of a rampant drugs culture, a brisk market in pornographic videos, a patients' council calling the shots and an under-strength nursing workforce bullied and beaten, but too cowed to impose proper discipline.

Stephen Dorrell, the Health Secretary, set the tone for the inquiry he ordered by commenting that "we must not allow fashionable ideas to compromise security". To his embarrassment, though, the five-strong outside inquiry team has reported no evidence for the main allegations. On the contrary, it says, Broadmoor has been moving from a custodial institution to one providing therapeutic care in a secure setting "without compromise of public safety".

The team is calling for some security improvements: an internal perimeter fence (although no patient has escaped since 1993), an X-ray machine to scan bags and new locks for all doors. Much of this was already planned — indeed, the hospital can only afford half of a £700,000 security programme this year.

What the inquiry has confirmed, however, is that some Broadmoor nurses are standing in the way of a truly therapeutic regime. Moreover, many are reliant on habitual overtime of more than 20 hours a week, in one case as much as 173 hours a month. If all overtime was stopped, the team calculates, 180 extra staff could be employed.

For all those angered by the posturing of the Prison Officers' Association, there is a certain satisfaction in this outcome.

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Commission spurns Italy, page 13

Tomorrow: Light for Eurotunnel?

Financial Editor: Alex Brummer
Telephone: 0171-239-9610
Fax: 0171-833-4456

Finance **Guardian**

View from IMF: Economy growing too fast and strength of pound is not enough to put brakes on

Taste of Britain . . . Kenneth Clarke and Asda chairman Archie Norman visit a pie factory in Tunbridge Wells where Mr Norman is Conservative candidate PHOTOGRAPH: SEAN SMITH

'Booming' Britain warned

Mark Tran in Washington, John Palmer in Brussels and Larry Elliott

BRITAIN'S sustained recovery needs to be reined in urgently by the Government to prevent the economy from overheating, the International Monetary Fund said yesterday.

While praising the stewardship by the Chancellor, Kenneth Clarke, the IMF said that the sharp rise in sterling's value would not be enough to put the brakes on the UK's five-year-long expansion.

But while the IMF stressed the need for tighter monetary policy and a further attack on the Budget deficit, the European Commission said Britain's strong growth meant it would meet the criteria for a single currency with room to spare.

The Commission predicted that the UK government Budget deficit will fall from 4.4 per cent last year to 2.9 per cent this and just 1.4 per cent next year — well under the 3 per cent target set by the Maastricht treaty.

According to the Commission's biannual economic report, Britain can expect rising investment and falling unemployment through to the end of 1998 although the pace of growth will decline from 2.8 per cent this year to 2.6 per cent. Unemployment is expected to continue falling from 6.8 per cent to 6.3 per cent, compared with an EU average of 10.3 per cent.

However, the IMF World Economic Outlook struck a cautionary note, warning that the British economy may be overheating from too much domestic demand.

"Wage increases have picked up as unemployment has continued to fall, and there is a risk that inflation will again exceed the authorities target (of 2.5 per cent or below) in 1998 and beyond unless further action is taken to rein in demand." The IMF calls "for an early tightening of monetary policy" and further action to cut the Budget deficit.

While government spending has been cut in recent years, the IMF points out that the November Budget only trimmed spending in the near term. "More fiscal action is needed to help restrain demand and alleviate the burden on monetary policy," the IMF said.

The Fund expects UK growth to be 3.3 per cent this year, by far the highest growth rate in Europe and only behind Canada (3.5 per cent) among the advanced economies. For 1998, growth in the UK is expected to moderate to 2.8 per cent, just behind France and Germany.

The 1997 growth forecasts were revised upwards to take into account renewed strength in personal spending and an expected pickup in investment.

The IMF said that during 1996 plans to balance the Budget in the medium term were put back a year because of revenue shortfalls, but agrees with the EC that the 1997 Budget deficit will slip below 3 per cent of GDP.

The half-yearly health check of the UK from Brussels, predicts that inflation will average 2.3 per cent this year but then edge up to 2.5 per cent in 1998, just above the EU average at 2.2 per cent.

The Commission also expects a bigger UK current account deficit this year and in 1998 but confidently forecasts that the British government debt will fall from 54.7 per cent of GDP to 53.8 per cent, comfortably below the 60 per cent goal which was included in the Maastricht treaty.

The report warns the time may be close for some action to curb inflation but it does not choose between higher interest rates or tax increases.

Healthy sales growth but no spree

View from the High Street

Charlotte Denny

BRITAIN'S high streets enjoyed healthy growth in retail sales but displayed no signs of a consumer boom last month, according to the latest figures on sales published yesterday.

But City economists were divided over whether the data backed the Bank of England's call for interest rates to rise, or Chancellor Kenneth Clarke's decision to keep rates on hold.

Sales volumes rose by 4 per cent over the year to March, down from 4.3 per cent in February according to data from the Office for National Statistics.

The rise over the month was 0.3 per cent. Underlying growth was stable with an increase of 1 per cent in the three months to March, compared to the previous quarter.

Simon Briscoe, from Nikko Bank, said that, although the 4 per cent figure was above trend, there was little sign of a consumer boom and there was no need for an increase in interest rates. "Growth is neither accelerating nor leading to inflationary pressures, and other parts of the economy are much weaker."

Most of the 1 per cent increase over the quarter resulted from sales growth in the non-food sector. Non-food stores showed a quarter on quarter increase of 1.8 per cent, compared to a 0.5 per cent for food stores.

"The figures should reassure the markets ahead of the [building society] windfalls," Mr Briscoe said.

But other City economists thought the data backed the Bank of England's position on interest rates. Olwen Renowden, from General Accident, said it was no surprise that the Governor, Eddie George, was calling for a rate increase.

In value terms sales showed stronger growth than the volume figures. The average weekly value of retail sales in March was £3.2 billion, 5.8 per cent higher than at the same point last year.

In the three months to March, the value of retail sales was 6.1 per cent higher than in the same period last year. Clothing and footware, and household goods enjoyed the biggest growth in sales value, with a 10 per cent rise in the year to March.

CBI calls for higher taxes

View from boardroom

Larry Elliott and Peter Hetherington

THE CBI yesterday urged the next Government to combat inflation through higher taxation rather than dearer borrowing after it revealed that the soaring pound has left UK exporters facing the toughest business climate for almost 25 years.

In its quarterly study of manufacturing, the employers' organisation warned that the recent strength of sterling had already sapped export confidence and that any further appreciation triggered by a rise in base rates would add to the squeeze on demand for British goods abroad.

The CBI said some tightening of economic policy was needed after the election to prevent the rapid expansion in the domestic economy spilling over into higher inflation.

Despite the attempts by the two main parties to outbid each other with tax-cutting plans, the CBI argued it would be better to put up taxes rather than risk penalising manufacturing through a stronger exchange rate.

Andrew Buxton, chairman of the CBI's economic affairs committee, said: "We believe that some tightening of the economy is necessary. That should either be interest rates or fiscal policy.

"We perhaps lean further towards fiscal policy than interest rates because we also believe that the public sector borrowing requirement is too high for this stage in the cycle. The problem one risks with interest rates is that it will make the pound strengthen even more."

The CBI survey painted a picture of a two-tier economy. Order books for domestic manufacturers are growing more strongly than at any time since the Lawson boom in 1988. But in an attempt to remain competitive, exporters are set to slash prices at the fastest rate since CBI records began in 1961.

A separate report out yesterday revealed that businesses in the North have "come down to earth with a bump" after a record performance in the last quarter of 1996.

The study — for the Northern Development Company, the regional investment agency, and the North East Chamber of Commerce — paints a gloomy picture of a region embracing Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear, Durham and Teesside suffering from low confidence and falling profits.

Overheating alert given cold shoulder

View from the Bank

Sarah Ryle

CHANCELLOR Kenneth Clarke is continuing to block Bank of England demands for an interest rate rise by arguing that the economy is in little danger of overheating, it emerged yesterday.

Last month he rejected the Bank's fears that a "substantial" increase in the base rate would have to be made later if the Government failed to raise this immediately to 6.25 per cent, the minutes of the March monetary policy meeting showed.

Mr Clarke tried to play down the scale of the disagreement. He and the Governor, Eddie George, "remained a 0.25 percentage point apart on their views on the appropriate level of interest rates" and called it a "small difference of judgment about the outlook for inflation one to two years ahead".

But the minutes showed the authorities were at odds over key factors — from consumer demand to the labour market.

Mr George said consumer demand "represented a developing threat" to the inflation target of 2.5 per cent, but Mr Clarke said consumers "were still cautious".

The Bank said the labour market was tightening, which would result in higher wage settlements on the back of rising manufacturing output. Overall national output was "well above any reasonable estimate of trend growth".

The Chancellor argued that the claimant measure of unemployment was flattered by the introduction of the Job Seekers Allowance. He said that the Labour Force Survey, the internationally recognised measure of joblessness, was falling less steeply.

They disagreed over the pound's rapid appreciation against foreign currencies and its dampening effect on import prices. Mr George argued that using the pound as an excuse to delay a rate rise would lead to "substantial monetary tightening" later.

This cut no ice with the Chancellor, who said the impact on exports was "significant" and would dent manufacturing confidence.

Prince to widen Planet Hollywood orbit

Dominic Walsh

OIL-RICH Saudi Arabian princes have a reputation for running their multi-billion-dollar affairs behind a heavy cloak of secrecy.

But Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal, whose $12 billion (£7.3 billion) fortune includes high-profile stakes in the likes of Euro Disney and TWA, is rapidly acquiring a taste for the company of some of the world's biggest celebrities.

The prince, who last year signed a joint venture with singer Michael Jackson, yesterday unveiled a $15 million investment that will enable him to rub shoulders with such box-office magnets as Bruce Willis, Sylvester Stallone and Arnold Schwarzenegger. He has taken a 1 per cent stake in Planet Hollywood, the US-based restaurant chain whose flotation a year ago added a few noughts to the fortunes of some Hollywood stars.

Under the terms of the agreement the prince, who is a nephew of King Fahd, will develop up to 34 Planet Hollywood restaurants in 23 countries. Initial locations include Brussels, Athens, Cairo and Budapest.

While the deal fits the prince's strategy of taking minority stakes in companies with a big international brand, he normally targets businesses that have seen better days. Citicorp, where his shares are worth 10 times what he paid for them in 1991, was in a parlous state when he became involved.

His most recent investments — 5 per cent holdings in ailing US carrier TWA and Apple Computer — are in the same vein.

Planet Hollywood is a different story. As Prince Alwaleed pointed out yesterday: "Planet Hollywood is a dynamic, well-managed company with exciting concepts that appeal to consumers in the Middle East and elsewhere." Indeed, Robert Earl, the 45-year-old Surrey University graduate who heads the company, is well on his way to becoming the world's first billionaire restaurateur.

Notebook

Spectre of 1988 enters the feast

Edited by Mark Milner

THE Chancellor, Kenneth Clarke, is rather more circumspect in his interpretation of the economic runes when he is talking to the Governor of the Bank of England, Eddie George, than when he is addressing the voters. Has he, for example, been heard to opine on the stump that the fall in unemployment may well be overstated by the introduction of the job seekers' allowance? No? But that is what he tells Mr George.

No one should be surprised. Mr Clarke wants the voters' approval, Mr George wants him to raise interest rates. Hence a different emphasis on the performance of the economy. Still, either way, Britain's economy is in good shape. Even the International Monetary Fund says so.

It is important, however, not to get carried away. As analysts at NatWest Markets are warning, there are worrying (they say spooky) parallels between the economic cycle now and in 1988 when, as many will painfully remember, consumption suddenly took off and boom subsequently turned very much to bust.

Some policy tightening looks inevitable. Expect Mr George to get his way on interest rates whoever wins the election. But tighter fiscal policy (higher taxes) would be a better bet. It would help curb consumer spending. It could take some of the steam out of a pound which is hurting exporters. It would also help repair the government finances. They may be improving with the economy but a balanced budget across the economic cycle looks a way off yet.

Don't hold your breath, however. When it comes to tax increases the circumspection of the two main political parties would make a Trappist monk appear garrulous.

Rosy forecast

THERE is something determinedly Panglossian about Yves-Thibault de Silguy, the monetary affairs commissioner. Yesterday, Mr de Silguy unveiled commission figures showing that — even in terms of budget deficits — almost all members of the European Union are on course to meet the qualifying standard for monetary union laid down by the Maastricht treaty. Only Greece, never rated a runner for 1999, and Italy, one of the most determined triers, are set to miss.

More than the Italian prime minister, Romano Prodi, will find the commission's views "incomprehensible". The EC may think that, for example, Germany will make the 3 per cent level laid down in the treaty. However, Germany's six leading economic institutes don't. They forecast on Tuesday that the country's budget deficit will fall quite sharply next year — but will still turn out at 3.2 per cent. Further heavyweight evidence against the EC's optimism comes from the International Monetary Fund. In its world economic outlook, published yesterday, it predicts that Germany would miss the Maastricht deficit target by some margin and argues that France — with a 1996 deficit of 4.1 per cent — would need further austerity measures if it was to make the grade. It did, however, agree with the commission in voting Italy a single currency "miss".

Though Mr de Silguy's optimism is an easy target, it would be wrong to overlook the progress that EU members have, in general, made in bringing their finances under control.

Whether such progress is equally generally sustainable (or, some might argue, even the right policy) or whether the single currency wannabees can squeeze out just a little more austerity is another matter. This spring, the EC is talking forecasts, next spring the issue will be membership. When high noon comes for both Pangloss and the pessimists, think of a number less than 13.

Debt plea

ACCORDING to the IMF, real gross domestic product in Africa grew by more than 5 per cent last year, the best for two decades. Good news, perhaps, but hardly likely to enable much of a dent to be put in the continent's debt burden. Since 1982, the level of debt in sub-Saharan Africa, for example, has doubled to more than 100 per cent of GDP.

The economic injustice represented by the debt mountain is a subject to which the Archbishop of Cape Town, The Most Reverend Njongonkulu Ndungane, will refer with particular force today. He will berate the countries of the First World for saddling poorer regions with crippling debt, punitive tariffs against exports and restrictive macroeconomic stance.

As a result, he will argue that those bearing the debt burden are swamped by malnourishment, famine and disease and, in some cases, war.

The outspoken cleric will call on western governments to mark the new millennium by forgiving the accumulated debts of Third World countries.

So far, there is little sign of a new spirit of forgiveness — even the much-vaunted £3.4 billion international initiative to help the Highly-Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) is faltering. According to Christian Aid, the price tag on HIPC is just a third of the cost of building the Channel tunnel. Americans spend the same amount each year on cinema tickets.

Mr Ndungane is not the first to plead for debt forgiveness for poor countries. Sadly, First World indifference makes it unlikely he will be the last.

Fraud costs EU £40bn a year

Lisa Buckingham

INTERNATIONAL fraud costs the European Union more than £40 billion a year largely because regulatory discrepancies between countries are exploited by professional criminals, a study for the European Commission has revealed.

The investigation by accountants Deloitte & Touche says fraud within Europe is of such a scale that it has the power seriously to distort competition between member states and can touch most individuals in the EU.

"Everyone pays for fraud through higher taxes, higher prices and shoddy goods, even if they are not a direct victim," the report says. But the report's author, Will Inglis, argues that unless the multi-billion pound issue is tackled on an international basis the criminals will win.

At present, Interpol reckons about £30 billion of counterfeit currency is confiscated each year and roughly one in four credit card frauds in Britain — a quarter of the total £30 million lost each year — is carried out by international gangs.

"National measures will merely have the effect of transferring the fraud from one location to another," Mr Inglis said.

The whole question of crime and fraud within Europe will be debated in mid-June at the Inter-Governmental Conference on the Maastricht Treaty.

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Canada 2.22	Hong Kong 12.29	New Zealand 2.28	Sweden 12.26
Cyprus 0.81	India 58.64	Norway 11.18	Switzerland 2.31
Denmark 10.42	Ireland 1.02	Portugal 273.00	Turkey 210,870
Finland 8.29	Israel 5.56	Saudi Arabia 6.02	USA 1.5970

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Italian outrage at EMU forecast

EC says Rome not on track for 1999

John Palmer in Brussels

A EUROPEAN Commission forecast that 13 of the 15 EU members will qualify for the single European currency in 1999 yesterday provoked outrage from Italy, excluded from the EMU premier league — and contradiction from the International Monetary Fund.

The Italian prime minister, Romano Prodi, launched a formal protest against the commission report that Italy, alone with Greece, is not on track to qualify.

Meanwhile, the IMF, in its World Economic Outlook, said France and Germany, with Italy, would not meet the key budget deficit criterion of 3 per cent for entry to monetary union without further policy action.

It said all three would have deficits of 3.3 per cent this year, while France's would rise to 3.4 per cent and Italy's to 4.1 per cent in 1998, when Germany's would fall to 2.9 per cent.

By sharp contrast, the commission said Germany would meet the criterion with a deficit of 3 per cent this year and 2.7 per cent in 1998, while France would qualify with 3 per cent in both years. Italy would fail in both years with 3.2 per cent and 3.9 per cent deficits.

The commission argued, in its biannual economic report, that faster growth and cuts in government budget deficits had boosted the number of countries likely to qualify.

"I believe that a majority of member states will meet the requirements for participation in the euro," the commissioner for the single currency, Yves-Thibault de Silguy, told the European Parliament in Brussels.

Mr de Silguy denied that the commission had massaged its forecasts under pressure from governments to present a rosy picture. "Governments can jump and shout and roll about but it will get them nowhere," he declared.

First wave . . . Italy's prime minister, Romano Prodi, says his country will reach the single currency date 'with all its papers in order' PHOTOGRAPH: FUNIO LEPRI

He defended the commission forecast that Italy's budget deficit would rise from 3.2 per cent this year to 3.9 per cent in 1998, pointing to some of the measures from Rome as temporary.

Last night Mr Prodi said he found the commission's forecast "incomprehensible" because it had not taken into account all the evidence provided by the Italian government. "The government . . . is deeply committed to following its own action of structural reform which will allow Italy to arrive at the single currency date with all its papers in order," he said.

The only comfort offered Mr Prodi by the commission was that Italy might still make monetary union if it takes further, long lasting, measures to cut the budget deficit. If this is politically impossible, the odds are that Italy will have to wait until the end of 1999 before joining the euro.

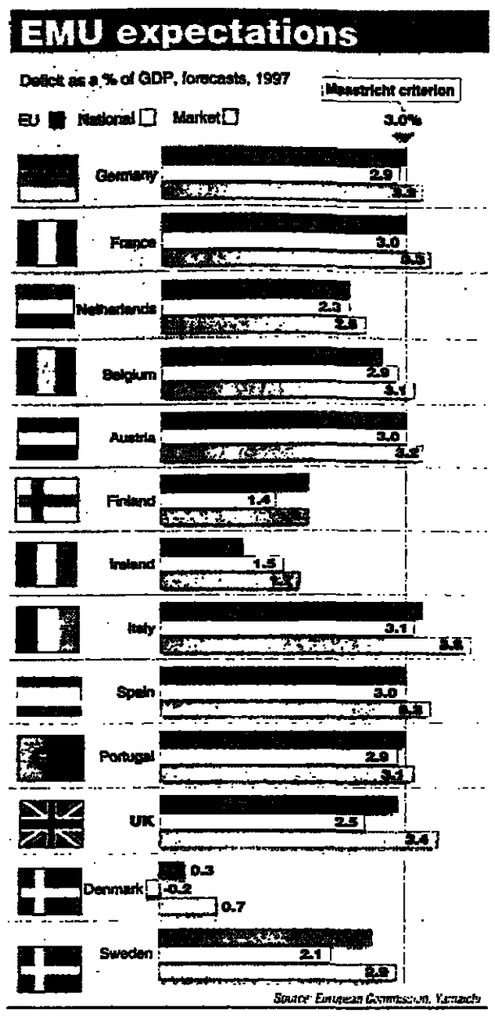
The commission rejected suggestions that its predictions of a 3 per cent deficit for France and Germany — exactly the target set by the Maastricht treaty — were too upbeat in the light of IMF and other forecasts. "The differences between our forecasts and those of other people are very slight. I would remind you that the commission has proved it has a good track record in its economic forecasts."

According to the commission, unless new measures are taken, the French deficit will remain at 3 per cent next year, while the German deficit will fall to 2.7 per cent.

Mr de Silguy said yesterday that five countries had already, in effect, qualified for the single currency — Denmark, Finland, Ireland, Luxembourg and the Netherlands. Portugal, Spain and Sweden have also made progress in meeting the single currency criteria.

The commission report makes much of the evidence of faster economic recovery this spring but Mr de Silguy warned that unemployment in the EU would remain at about 10.3 per cent in 1998.

In a separate report yesterday, the commission said that the euro would gradually rival the dollar on global markets, transforming a largely dollar dominated world monetary system.



CBI sets out the options

THE CBI yesterday made clear that believed Britain should prepare to take part in a single currency, writes Simon Beavis.

It is sending a consultation document to its regional councils setting out the pros and cons of EMU and asking members to back one of three options: rule out entry for the foreseeable future; join at the earliest practicable date; or join some time after the start.

CBI economist Kate Barker said "We are happy to see the options kept open at the moment."

IMF says Fed will have to raise rates

Mark Tran in Washington reports on global health check

THE International Monetary Fund predicted yesterday that the Federal Reserve, America's central bank, will raise interest rates by another half a percentage point this year to head off the risk of inflationary pressure in the American economy.

"The markets seem to anticipate a rise of another 50 basis points this year and that more or less accords with my judgment," Michael Mussa, its chief economist, said as the IMF presented its 1997 World Economic Outlook.

While he acknowledged the possibility of Fed inaction if the US economy slowed of its own accord, he suggested that "more moderate firming will be needed".

In its Outlook, the IMF said that the US economy continued to operate near capacity during 1996, with the unemployment rate falling to 5.25 per cent in the middle of last year and staying near that level, below most estimates of the natural rate of employment.

While inflation remained subdued at 2.5 per cent, the IMF noted there was some acceleration in wages. "A pick-up in inflation and the need for stronger tightening of monetary policy than is assumed remain a risk in the forecast," the IMF said. It sees US inflation rising to 3 per cent in 1998, with growth slowing to 2.2 per cent.

The Federal Reserve launched a pre-emptive strike against inflation in late March, raising short-term rates by a quarter-point to 5.5 per cent. Its first tightening in two years. Wall Street expects more rate increases when the Fed meets in May.

IMF experts said the world economy should grow at a slightly more vigorous pace this year and next, with the US and UK leading the charge. They expect the global economy to grow by 4.4 per cent this year, compared with the 4.2 per cent they forecast last October, and growth in the advanced economies to reach almost 3 per cent.

But they see continental Europe still mired in slow growth with unemployment stuck at record levels:

US and UK are expected to lead the charge as world economy picks up pace

"Although growth is expected to improve in 1997 in Europe, its projected pace of 2.5 per cent will be insufficient to make any significant dent in the high level of unemployment."

There is not much sign of a revival in domestic demand in Germany, France and Italy, amid low consumer confidence and weakened consumer consumer spending. The situation is likely to be exacerbated by efforts to meet the Maastrich criteria for Economic and Monetary Union.

In Japan, the recovery became more broadly based in 1996 and the economic climate improved, thanks to easier monetary policy, tax cuts and a fall in the yen. GDP growth picked up in the fourth quarter, reflecting increased domestic demand and stronger exports because of the lower yen. Economic growth is projected to reach 2.2 per cent in 1997, rising to 2.9 per cent next year.

In the developing countries, growth accelerated to 6.5 per cent last year from 6 per cent in 1995, as stronger activity in Africa, Latin America and the Middle East offset a moderate slowdown in parts of Asia. Particularly encouraging was Africa's growth in 1996. Real GDP is estimated to have risen about 5 per cent, the strongest growth in 20 years and nearly twice the average rate since the early 1970s.

But some of the poorest countries on the continent have fallen behind not only in relative but also absolute terms.

The IMF says these countries at the bottom of the economic ladder need to open their economies, reform government, establish financial markets, and maintain internal and external financial stability. The IMF and the World Bank are expected to announce the first debt relief agreement for Africa today, with Uganda the beneficiary.

In eastern Europe, the IMF says, the contraction in economic activity appears to have bottomed out in 1996 after six years of steep decline. The transition economies made great headway in bringing prices under control as inflation fell to 40 per cent on an annual average basis, its lowest rate since the transition began.

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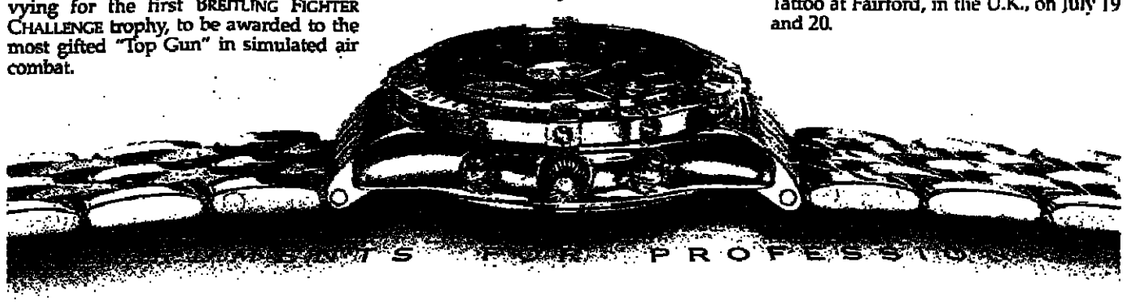
Following their initial attempt at flying around the world in a balloon, Bertrand Piccard and Wim Verstraeten will lift off again early next year aboard the BREITLING ORBITER 2, an all-new and even larger roziere-type balloon with a slightly modified capsule.

U.S. AIR FORCE 50 1947 - 1997

With 1997 definitely a banner year for aeronautics, BREITLING will be on hand for the USAF'S 50th anniversary celebrations, not least at the International Air Tattoo at Fairford, in the U.K., on July 19 and 20.

CHRONO JETSTREAM



Racing

Up and down day for Dettori

Chris Hawkins sees the former champion floored after riding first-race winner

IT WAS a day of ups and downs for Frankie Dettori at Epsom's switchback course yesterday. Having helped promote the Derby in his own inimitable style, Dettori kicked off with a winner but ended up with mild concussion.

The former champion was stood down for two days, tomorrow and Friday, after being thrown from Move With Edes at the start of the concluding Warren Stakes.

It appeared a fairly innocuous fall, but Dettori took a bang on the forehead and will have to pass the course doctor before being allowed to resume at Sandown on Saturday.

Dettori is the Juninho of racing — a little man with a dominating talent — and he made all the difference when getting Lord Olivier up in the final strides to beat Selhurstpark Flyer in the Banstead Handicap.

Selhurstpark Flyer, ridden by apprentice Paul Roberts, looked all over the winner entering the final furlong but Dettori sat down and got the last ounce out of his mount.

Lord Olivier is owned by trainer Willie Jarvis's aunt Viv, whose brother Sir Jack left his mark at Epsom by training the Derby winner Blue Peter.

Epsom are planning a wide-ranging marketing campaign to make sure Derby Day on Saturday June 7 retains its reputation as the world's most famous Flat race.

Giving the race "back to the people" is the theme of the promotion which involves improving facilities and entertainment on the Hill, reducing prices for buses and arranging a Festival of British Brewing at Tattenham Corner.

For the first time the meeting will be two days instead of three, with the Oaks and Coronation Cup being run on the Friday.

This season marks the end of the current Vodafone three-year-sponsorship of the Derby, a deal worth £3.5 million, and speculation is rife that the company will pull out.

Terry Barwick, Vodafone's director of corporate affairs, did his best to diffuse the rumours and said that if the sponsorship is considered to have been successful it will continue.

"No conversation has taken place within the company about ending the Derby sponsorship," said Barwick. "We would love to see a television audience of five million but that is not the be-all and end-all."

Channel 4 has the television rights for the Derby. Viewing figures last year were just over two million, when the time of the race was brought forward to avoid a direct clash with England's first match of Euro 96.

Incorporating the race into Saturday afternoon's Grandstand on BBC would certainly boost the figure but Sue Ellen, managing director of United Racecourses denied that the BBC have made an approach for a one-off broadcast.

● The Levy Board yesterday announced an increase of £500,000 in prize money next year, but said that cuts would be necessary in other directions. Faced with a likely £5 million fall in income, the Board recommends the reduction of the cost of the integrity services.

Crazy gang . . . Wimbledon FC players, and others, get behind Frankie Dettori to help promote Derby Day at Epsom yesterday PHOTO: PHIL COLE/ALLSPORT

Tennis

French Open doubt after Hingis fall

Stephen Bierley in Monte Carlo

MARTINA HINGIS, who three weeks ago swooped like a spring swallow ahead of Steffi Graf as the women's No. 1, has undergone arthroscopic surgery on her left knee after falling off a friend's horse.

The injury to her cruciate ligament is not considered serious, but according to her mother she will miss the next three tournaments, the Rexona Cup in Hamburg, the Italian Open in Rome and the German Open in Berlin. She has already officially withdrawn from the first two.

The accident happened on Monday, close to Hingis's home in Trubbach, Switzerland. She did not feel any immediate pain and carried on riding, but next day she had extreme difficulty bending her knee, and her whole leg was severely bruised.

In considerable pain, she was referred to a sports injury specialist, Dr Schenk, in the nearby Austrian town of Schrunz, who discovered that the cruciate ligament was not torn but badly stretched; luckily there was no damage to the medial ligament.

Yesterday the Swiss player was said to be in no pain and in good spirits. "Obviously I'm grateful there is no major damage to my knee," she said, and stressed that the fall would not stop her riding.

With the French Open barely a month away the chances of her being fit hardly seem good. Her absence would be another severe blow to the women's game; Graf, also suffering from a knee injury, has not played any competitive tennis this year and continues to delay her comeback, and indeed there were rumours yesterday that she may never play again.

Hingis is undefeated this year and has won six titles, including her first Grand Slam victory at the Australian Open in Melbourne. After winning the Lipton championship in March she became the youngest women's No. 1, aged 16.

Falling was the continued theme at the Monte Carlo Open, which had barely recovered from Tuesday's loss of Pete Sampras and Thomas Muster, the world's No. 1 and No. 2, plus Boris Becker, to say nothing of Monaco's home defeat by Internazionale. Another seven seeds bit the red dust here yesterday, including the French Open champion and world No. 4 Yevgeny Kafelnikov, who after two operations on a broken finger has yet to win a match in four attempts this year. He lost 6-4, 2-6, 6-4 to Norway's Christian Ruud.

One man in the most imperious form is the Wimbledon champion Richard Krajicek, who arrived here on Tuesday morning from Tokyo, where he won the Japan Open. The Dutchman could be forgiven for not knowing what time of day it was, or which country, as he took the centre court against Germany's Michael Stich, and when he lost an early service game the jet-lag excuses were already being penned.

But poor Stich, a finalist at Roland Garros last May, is currently shot to pieces and totally lacking confidence. Krajicek, who also won a tournament in Rotterdam this year, began to pass the German at will to rattle off a thoroughly impressive 6-3, 6-0 victory.

Beverley with form guide and ratings

	RON COX	TOP FORM
2.10	Cathedral (nap)	Cambridge Blue
2.40	Misterton	Double Gold
3.10	Hen Harrier	Hawait (nap)
3.40	Teofilio	Teofilio
4.10	Tallulah Belle	Portite Sophie
4.40	Ajayib	Ajayib (nb)

Right-hand circuit of 1m3f with 2½f run-in. Testing 5f course, bends right at half way.
Going: Good to firm. ★ Denotes blinkers.
Draw: High numbers best over 5f.
Long distance travellers: 3.10 Hen Harrier, 3.40 Nobel Lad, 4.40 Ajayib, J Dunlop, Sussex 245 miles. 2.10 Cambridge Blue, 4.40 Regal Reprimand, G Lewis, Surrey 211 miles. 2.10 Hoh Dancer, 4.40 Norman Conquest, I Balding, Berks. 211 miles. 2.10 Cathedral, 2.40 Double Gold, 3.40 Begorrat, B Meehan; 3.10 Hawait, 3.40 Neronian, B Hills; 4.10 On The Wildside, M Channon, all Lambourn, Berks, 199 miles.
Seven day winners: 3.10 Hen Harrier.
Blinkered first time: None.
Figures in brackets after horse's name denote days since last outing

2.10 FULFORD MAIDEN STAKES 5f £3,743 (14 declared)

[illegible]

2.40 PANNELL CLAIMING STAKES 3-Y-O 1m 2f £2,574 (9 declared)

[illegible]

3.10 SANTON RATED STAKES HANDICAP 3-Y-O 7f 100yds £4,581 (7 declared)

[illegible]

3.40 MOORTOWN MAIDEN STAKES 1m 100yds £3,660 (11 declared)

[illegible]

4.10 ALWOODLEY FILLIES' HANDICAP 1m 2f £2,923 (11 declared)

[illegible]

4.40 WOODHALL SPA HANDICAP 3-Y-O 1m 2f £3,522 (7 declared)

[illegible]

COURSE SPECIALISTS

[illegible]

Results

EPSOM

[illegible]

PERTH

[illegible]

CATTERICK

[illegible]

PUNCHESTOWN

[illegible]

Trainer watch

[illegible]

Perth National Hunt runners and riders

	RON COX	TOP FORM
2.00	Border Glory	Ensign Ewart
2.30	Major Harris	Sparkling Spring
3.00	Monyman (nb)	Monyman
3.30	Sueselja	Eden Dancer
4.00	Saxon Mead	Moozam
4.30	Linlathen	Bellion

Right-hand circuit of 1¼m, lengthy run-in on chase course.
Going: Good. ★ Denotes blinkers.
Long distance travellers: 3.30 Danucha & Saboteuse, J Poulton, Sussex 483 miles. 4.00 Saxon Mead, 4.30 Amlah, P Hobbs, Somerset 429 miles. 3.30 Vanborough Lad, M Bolton, Wilts 428 miles. 2.00 Fifth Amendment, C Mann, 2.30 Sparkling Spring, 4.00 Tidebrook; K Bailey, both Lambourn Berks 411 miles.
Seven day winners: 3.00 Monyman. Blinkered first time: 2.30 Persian Grange; 4.00 Royal Banker.
Figures in brackets after horse's name denote days since last NH outing

2.00 PERTH HUNT BALNAKEILLY HUNTERS' CHASE (Amateurs) 3m £2,388 (14 declared)

[illegible]

2.30 NELSON MORRISON AGENCY 'NH' NOVICE HURDLE 3m 110yds £4,695 (13 declared)

[illegible]

Betting: 4-1 Young Kenny, 9-2 Sparkling Spring, Meadow Hymn, 5-1 Lagan Bridge, 7-1 Paparising, 8-1 Major Harris

3.00 R M C CATHERWOOD LTD 'LITTLE BAY' H'CAP CHASE 2m £6,721 (6 declared)

[illegible]

Betting: 6-4 Monyman, 3-1 Nethertby Said, 4-1 Political Tower, 6-1 Grouse-N-Heather, 10-1 Stone Falcon.

3.30 MURRAYSHALL HOTEL SELLING HURDLE 2m 110yds £2,906 (21 declared)

[illegible]

4.00 TOTE CREDIT MAIDEN CHASE 2m £3,655 (11 declared)

[illegible]

4.30 NELSON MORRISON HANDICAP HURDLE 2m 4f 110yds £3,648 (13 declared)

[illegible]

COURSE SPECIALISTS

[illegible]

Fontwell National Hunt card

	RON COX	TOP FORM
2.20	Nordic Spree	Galatasori Jane
2.50	Keep It Zipped	Decyborg
3.20	Scud Missile	Adilov
3.50	Morning Blush	Snow Board
4.20	Toomuch Toosoon	Mill O'The Rags
4.50	He Knows The Rules	Mellistor

Chase course tight figure-of-eight track; hurdles, left-hand oval of about 1m
Going: Good to firm. ★ Denotes blinkers.
Long distance travellers: 3.20 Born To Please, P Hobbs, Somerset, 143 miles. 2.50 Decyborg, 3.50 Runaway Pete, M Pipe, Somerset, 136 miles. 3.20 Scud Missile, J Payne, 4.20 Mill O'The Rags, Mrs D Haine, Newmarket, 126 miles.

[illegible]

2.20 RAPIDE MORTGAGE SERVICES AND FINBAR NOVICE HURDLE 2m 6f 110yds £2,354 (8 declared)

[illegible]

2.50 RAPIDE MORTGAGE SERVICES NOVICE CHASE 3m 2f 110yds £3,059 (3 declared)

[illegible]

3.20 STREBEL BOILERS AND RADIATORS HANDICAP HURDLE 2m 6f 110yds £2,322 (4 declared)

[illegible]

3.50 RAPIDE MORTGAGE & CORNHILL LIFE H'CAP HURDLE 3m 3f £3,656 (4 declared)

[illegible]

4.20 GEORGE GALE & CO HANDICAP CHASE 2m 2f £3,043 (5 declared)

[illegible]

4.50 RMS AND TCR MAIDEN HURDLE 2m 2f 110yds £2,485 (12 declared)

[illegible]

COURSE SPECIALISTS

[illegible]

Soccer

Premiership

Derby County 0, Nottingham Forest 0

Forest hold out but the end is nigh

Nigel Gardner

NOTTINGHAM Forest avoided the ignominy of losing to their neighbouring arch-rivals but a point from a scrappy skirmish did little for their prospects of Premiership survival.

Derby enjoyed most of the possession but Forest, strangely subdued in the first half, eventually realised the urgency of their plight, only to spurn several late chances.

Pierre van Hooydonk was the chief culprit, firing straight at Taylor in the 79th minute while the substitute Haaland was also denied by the Derby goalkeeper three minutes later.

Dave Bassett's dream of automatic promotion with Crystal Palace died in Derby a year ago and he returned last night, as Forest's general manager, this time facing Premiership extinction. Bassett is an acknowledged escapologist but defeat would surely have left Forest condemned.

Derby, who could use a few more points themselves for safety's sake, largely dominated a first half curiously short on passion and should have scored in the fourth minute when Sturridge robbed Warner only for Fettis to beat away a left-foot drive.

Forest's service to their front runners was poor and when the ball was pumped towards the head of Van Hooydonk, the rangy Dutchman he was consistently outjumped by Dailly.

Derby's own gangling striker Wanchope a former basketball player, was more effective, heading against the bar in the 21st minute, although Forest responded within a minute when Gemmill went past Powell only for Taylor saved his low shot.

Chettle brought the Forest fans to life with a 30-yard rising drive that clipped the top of the bar, but Derby finished the half better, with Wanchope forcing Fettis to make a further save.

Derby continued to pose the greater threat after the break with Wanchope chesting the ball on for Sturridge to burst through but Fettis spread himself bravely.

Fettis rescued Forest twice more in quick succession, first grabbing a 20-yard swerving free-kick from Asanovic at the second attempt and then throwing himself at Trollope's feet.

Soon afterwards Forest wasted their best chance of the night when a Woan shot was deflected into the path of Hooydonk but he blazed wildly over the bar from 12 yards to his evident distress.

But it was becoming one-way traffic with Derby in the driving seat. Again Fettis kept Forest in the match when Sturridge, sent through on the right by Van Der Laan, jinked his way to the by-line before driving a shot from a tight angle against the goalkeeper's body.

Derby County (3-5-2): Taylor; Laursen, Rowett, Dailly; Carsley, Van Der Laan, Trollope, Asanovic, C Powell; Sturridge, Wanchope.
Nottm Forest (3-1-4-2): Fettis; Lyttle, Warner, Chettle; Phillips; O'Neil, Gemmill, Woan, Allen; Saunders, Van Hooydonk.
Referee G Poll (Tring).

Stand and deliver . . . Derby's striker Wanchope caught in two minds as Chettle swings his left foot at the Baseball Ground PHOTOGRAPH: GRAHAM CHADWICK

Le Saux drops diplomatic hint

Ian Ross

ROY HODGSON's first task on his arrival at Blackburn from Internazionale in June will be to persuade Graeme Le Saux to remain at Ewood Park.

Although the England defender has two years left on his contract, he is anxious to leave before the start of next season, preferably for a Premiership club in London.

The 28-year-old Le Saux, who seriously interests Arsenal, has become disenchanted since the departure of Kenny Dalglish, the manager who tempted Chelsea to sell him for £650,000 in March 1993.

"I have not made my decision public yet," said Le Saux. "I have to be a politician; it would be improper for me to say too much. All I want to do is make the most of my career."

The Guardian Sport Offer

WIN VIP TICKETS TO ENGLAND VS GEORGIA

On April 30, Alan Shearer returns to the England team for the Green Flag International against Georgia — a vital World Cup qualifying match. [illegible] We have five pairs of tickets to see the game — courtesy of official sponsors and motoring assistance group, Green Flag — exclusively for Guardian readers. One first-prize winner will receive hospitality before, during and after the game, and all five winners will also receive a Green Flag England training top. If you are not lucky enough to win, you can always buy tickets on the ticket hotline 0161 982 6598. To enter the draw, simply call the hotline number below.

0891 333 453

Terms & Conditions: [illegible] Winners will be drawn at random from all entries received by 28/4/97. [illegible] The Guardian, 119, Farringdon Road, London EC1R 3ER.

GREEN FLAG INTERNATIONAL

Leicester City 0, West Ham United 1

Moncur gives Hammers a lift

Peter White

WEST HAM improved their chances of avoiding relegation from the Premiership when a goal by John Moncur gave them victory at Filbert Street last night. It was only Moncur's second goal of the season but it was good enough to move West Ham out of the bottom three and above both Sunderland and Coventry in the battle for survival.

This was Leicester's first appearance at home since winning the Coca-Cola Cup, and they were trying to end a run of eight straight defeats at the hands of West Ham. But the home side looked sadly out of touch, and gave no signs that they would put on a show for their loyal supporters.

The visitors were little better. They showed few attacking ideas in an opening half which saw two bookings for each team — Lennon and Elliott for Leicester, and Rieper and Porfirio for West Ham.

At least Parker, in Leicester's midfield, did his best to fire up his team-mates with some positive breaks forward. When Campbell, on as 16th minute substitute for the injured Izzet, was brought down near the edge of the penalty area by Moncur, Parker hit a swerving free-kick which Miklosko gathered at the second attempt.

The referee Roger Dilkes failed to appear for the second half and was replaced in the middle by his senior assistant Grant Hegley.

Claridge, the Coca-Cola Cup final goal hero, had the perfect opportunity to put the home side in front when he was left unmarked just a few yards out after Walsh had turned a centre from Campbell into the path of the striker.

But Claridge somehow got the ball stuck under his foot before delivering a weak shot which Miklosko managed to scramble away. The clearance fell invitingly to Elliott, but his effort was directed straight at the West Ham keeper.

There were two more cautions before the game reached the hour mark. Hartson and Hall, both of West Ham, were shown the yellow card by the deputy referee for rash tackles from behind.

West Ham's first real threat on Leicester's goal resulted in them taking a 75th-minute lead. A long throw by Lomas was helped on by Ferdinand for Moncur to nudge the ball home from close range.

Leicester City (5-3-2): Keller; Grayson, Prior, Elliott, Walsh, Guppy; Lennon, Parker, Izzet (Campbell, 16min), Claridge, Heskey.
West Ham United (5-3-2): Miklosko, Potts, Rieper, Hall, Ferdinand, Hughes; Lomas, Moncur, Porfirio; Hartson, Kitson.
Referees R Dilkes (Mossley; G Hegley, Bishop's Stortford, h-t).

Scottish Cup, semi-final replay: Celtic 0, Falkirk 1

McGrillen's header puts Falkirk on cloud nine

Patrick Glenn

TO FALKIRK a deserved rerun of the 1957 final against Kilmarnock on May 24. To Celtic only ignominy and, probably, the sack for the manager Tommy Burns.

No Old Firm manager could expect to survive such a grisly result at the end of a season of disappointments, and Burns has built a team with as much substance and menace as a scarecrow.

Falkirk taking the lead would have been a shock in any circumstances, but it was the more unexpected for having been preceded by 20 minutes of almost unrelenting pressure by Celtic.

The favourites' authority, however, was not translated into clear-cut scoring opportunities and, as they have often shown this season, that can be a dangerous trend. The Celtic midfielders and forwards were betrayed by their defenders' appalling susceptibility to panic.

A long cross from the right, knocked back across the area by Hagen, was all it took to send Stubbs, Boyd and the others into a flap. As they fell apart, McGrillen stepped forward and headed the loose ball over Kerr from 10 yards.

Celtic only had Donnelly's blocked shot and Di Canio's low centre, cleared at the post by McGowan, to remember from the first half.

Their fans may have anticipated a second half of unremitting pressure but it was the First Division side who should have scored another after nine minutes. McGrillen played the ball in and it was deflected straight to McKenzie, but the midfielder hit the post and the ball rebounded into play.

Thom then came close to equalising, his low, right-foot shot from the edge of the box skidding to the right of Nelson, who got down quickly to make a good save.

Celtic (4-4-2): Kerr; McNamara, Stubbs, Boyd, McKinlay; Donnelly, Hannah, Thom, O'Donnell (Johnson, 55min); Di Canio, Cadete.
Falkirk (3-5-2): Nelson; Oliver, James, Gray; McGowan, McKenzie, Hagen, McGrillen, Seaton; McAllister, Crabbe.
Referee: W Young (Clarkston).

Reds in need of minor miracle

Ian Ross says that Liverpool will be rank outsiders tonight

THEY used to say it was only the foolish and the rich who were bold enough to bet against Liverpool. But backing them now is a riskier business, and there are unlikely to be many willing to gamble on them overcoming Paris St-Germain at Anfield this evening in the European Cup Winners' Cup semi-final second leg.

Two weeks ago in the Parc des Princes, Liverpool produced their most inept performance of the season in losing the first leg 3-0 to opponents who were at their imperious best.

And therein lies Liverpool's only hope of salvation: if the roles can be reversed they just might produce a miracle. "We will have to play fantastically well and they will have to play poorly if we are to reach the final," said their manager Roy Evans.

However, since Liverpool began playing competitive European football in 1964 they have never recovered from a three-goal deficit.

"Yes, it is a tall order, but we must believe we can do it," said Evans. "If we can get an early goal, if we can get them on the run, you never know what might happen."

Evans will play three forwards, Fowler, Collymore and Berger, to try to force an early breakthrough.

He has kept faith with David James, although he will be praying the goalkeeper does not repeat the errors that handed wins to Paris and Manchester United.

The team are behind James, and Stan Collymore typified the solidarity, saying: "David has made mistakes but no one deserves to be slaughtered like he has been. The players and the management are right behind him."

Paris, who will be without the injured Domi at left-back, are confident. Their coach Ricardo Gomes Raymundo said: "To sit back and to defend would be foolish; we shall go forward in search of an away goal."

The Bolton striker John McGinlay seems certain to miss Scotland's crucial World Cup tie against Sweden in Gothenburg on Wednesday because of a groin injury, *adds Patrick Glenn.*

Bolton will pick up the First Division trophy at Burnden Park tomorrow after the match against Charlton.

● If Brighton avoid relegation to the Conference their plans to play home games at the Greyhound Stadium in Hove may be in jeopardy because it does not meet Football League ground rules.

● Stuart Pearce is to stay at Nottingham Forest next season, as a player if not as manager, regardless of whether they are relegated.

Results

Soccer

EUROPEAN CUP

Semi-finals, second leg

Man Utd (0) 0 Borussia Dortmund (1) 1
53,606 Ricken 8
(agg: 0-2)
Juventus 4, Ajax 1 (agg: 6-2).

FA CARLING PREMIERSHIP

Derby (0) 0 Nottm Forest (0) 0
18,087

Leicester (0) 0 West Ham (0) 1
20,327 Moncur 75

NATIONWIDE LEAGUE

First Division

Crystal Palace (1) 3 Reading (0) 2
Linighan 13 Bodin 57
Hopkin 49 Williams 82
Shipperley 69 12,552

Wolverhampton (1) 1 Grimsby (1) 1
Gilkes 10 Oster 45
25,474

TENNENTS SCOTTISH CUP

Semi-final replay

Celtic (0) 0 Falkirk (1) 1
35,879 McGrillen 19

UNIBOND LEAGUE: Premier Division: Buxton 0, Hyde Utd 3.
PONTINS LEAGUE: Premier Division: Oldham 0, Leeds 1; Sheff Wed 2, Birmingham 1; Stoke 3, Bolton 2. First Division: Notts Co 0, Aston Villa 4; West Brom 3, Sunderland 2. Second Division: Bradford C 1, Shrewsbury 1; Stockport 1, Carlisle 0. Third Division: Darlington 1, Chesterfield 1; Lincoln 2, Bury 0; Rochdale 2, Chester 1; Walsall 3, Wigan 0.
AVON INSURANCE COMBINATION: First Division: Arsenal 3, Ipswich 0; Bournemouth 0, Cardiff 0; Millwall 0, Luton 1; Portsmouth 1, Bristol C 1; Southampton 1, Bristol Rvrs 2; Wimbledon 4, Swindon 2.
LEAGUE OF WALES: Barry Tn 3, Inter Cable-Tel 0; Ebbw Vale 4, Aberystwyth 0.
WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL: Italy 2, England 0.

Rugby Union

REPRESENTATIVE MATCH: RAF 24, Royal Navy 34.
COURAGE CLUBS CHAMPIONSHIP: National League One: Sale 41, Ldn Irish 25. National League Four, North: Aspatria 8, Kendal 11.

Rugby League

STONES SUPER LEAGUE
Bradford (12) 28, Halifax (10) 26. Bradford: Tries: Knox 3, Calland, McNamara. Goals: McNamara 4. Halifax: Tries: Pearson 2, M Jackson, Moana, Munro. Goals: Pearson 3 (13,283)
ALLIANCE CHAMPIONSHIP: Wigan 54, Salford 12.

Golf

US CHAMPIONSHIP MATCH PLAY TOURNAMENT (Lake Oconee, Georgia): Semi-finals: D Love III bt T Lehman 3-2; P Mickelson bt F Couples 1up. Final: Love bt Mickelson 1up.

Tennis

MONTE CARLO OPEN: Second round: R Krajicek (Neth) bt M Stich (Ger) 6-3, 6-0; C Costa (Sp) bt W Ferreira (SA) 6-4, 7-6; E Alvarez (Sp) bt A Berasategui (Sp) 6-3, 3-6, 6-4; M Philippoussis (Aus) bt J Courier (US) 7-5, 7-5; A Costa (Sp) bt S Dosedel (Cz) 6-3, 6-3; B Ulihrach (Cz) bt T Enqvist (Swe) 7-5, 4-6, 6-3; C Ruud (Nor) bt Y Kafelnikov (Rus) 6-4, 2-6, 6-4; A Corretja (Sp) bt C Pioline (Fr) 6-4, 6-3; A Medvedev (Ukr) bt F Mantilla (Sp) 6-2, 6-4; D Vacek (Cz) bt M Rosset (Switz) 7-6, 6-1; M Rios (Chile) bt A Gaudenzi (It) 6-2, 6-2; S Bruguera (Sp) bt J Siemerink (Neth) 6-4, 6-4; A Boetsch (Fr) bt R Furlan (It) 3-6, 6-4, 6-2; C Moya (Sp) bt F Clavet (Sp) 6-1, 4-6, 6-1.
MEN'S CLAY COURT CHAMPIONSHIP (Orlando): First round: M Chang (US) bt J-M Gambill (US) 6-3, 6-3; A O'Brien (US) bt G Schaller (Aut) 6-4, 6-2; C Woodruff (US) bt J Frana (Arg) 4-6, 6-4, 6-4; B Black (Zim) bt J Van Herck (Bel) 6-3, 7-6; F Meligeni (Br) bt M Merklein (US) 7-6, 7-6; M Norman (Swe) bt G Raoux (Fr) 7-5, 2-1 ret; M Filippini (Uru) bt W Black (Zim) 6-4, 7-5; G Stafford (SA) bt T Champion (Fr) 6-2, 6-1; J A Viloca (Sp) bt L Jensen (US) 6-2, 6-2.
BUDAPEST WOMEN'S OPEN: First round: E Wagner (Ger) bt R Zrubakova (Slovak) 3-6, 6-4, 6-3; N Dechy (Fr) bt V Csurgo (Hun) 7-5, 6-3; J Kruger (SA) bt R Kuti Kiss (Hun) 6-3, 6-1; A Fusai (Fr) bt C Cristea (Rom) 3-6, 6-2, 6-4; C Torrens-Valero (Sp) bt S Dopfer (Aut) 6-3, 6-2.
LTA SPRING SATELLITE (Bournemouth): Men: First round: N Weal (GB) bt P Hand (GB) 6-3, 6-3; A Strambini (Switz) bt C Auffray (Fr) 6-3, 6-3; J Chanvin (Fr) bt M Lee (GB) 6-1, 2-6, 6-4; V Spynain (SA) bt I Bates (GB) 6-3, 6-4; I Neuwaller (Aut) bt P Langvardt (Den) 7-6, 6-2; R Lavergne (Fr) bt N Gould (GB) 6-2, 7-6; C Beecher (GB) bt D Sapsford (GB) 6-4, 4-6, 6-1; J Weinzierl (Ger) bt D Roditi (US) 7-5 def; R Gilbert (Fr) bt T Spinks (Ger) 6-1, 6-4; A Bolobrajdic (Aus) bt A Gonzalez (Sp) 6-4, 6-2; L Milligan (GB) bt D Kiernan (GB) 6-1, 6-0; J Delgado (GB) bt B Cowan (GB) 6-0, 6-2; N Coutelot (Fr) bt P Robinson (GB) 6-4, 7-6; M MacLagan (GB) bt A Foster (GB) 6-4, 6-2; S Barron (Ire) bt M Bok (Neth) 6-4, 7-6.
Women: Second round: D Vandezande (Bel) bt A Janes (GB) 6-4, 6-4; J Ward (GB) bt A Scharlschwert (Ger) 6-2, 6-2; L Woodroffe (GB) bt P Russegger (Aut) 6-2, 6-3; N Tijssen (Neth) bt B Auer (Aut) 6-3, 6-1; L Ahl (GB) bt D Muscolino (Arg) 6-1, 6-4; S Siddall (GB) bt L Latimer (GB) 6-4, 6-4; J Pullin (GB) bt A Wainwright (GB) 6-7, 6-3, 6-1; C Taylor (GB) bt L Ogan (GB) 6-7, 7-6, 6-3.

Baseball

NATIONAL LEAGUE: New York 7, Cincinnati 2; Montreal 5, Chicago 1; Colorado 13, Florida 4; Los Angeles 4, St Louis 6; San Diego 3, Houston 12; San Francisco 0, Atlanta 4.
AMERICAN LEAGUE: Oakland 3, Minnesota 5; Cleveland 2, Boston 8; Baltimore 3, Chicago 2; New York 10, Milwaukee 2; Anaheim 6, Toronto 7; Seattle 7, Kansas City 2.

Chess

AMBER BLINDFOLD-RAPID INVITATION (Monaco). Round Four: V Anand (Ind) 1, A Karpov (Rus) 1; L Ljubojevic (Yug) 1, V Ivanchuk (Ukr) 1; V Topalov (Bul) 1½, V Kramnik (Rus) ½; A Sirov (Sp) 1½, J Lautier (Fr) ½; P Nikolic (Bos) 2, U Andersson (Swe) 0; J Piket (Neth) ½, L van Wely (Neth) 1½. Leaders: van Wely 6; Kramnik, Nikolic, Topalov 5½; Anand, Shirov 5. Also: Karpov 3½.

Ice Hockey

NHL: Stanley Cup play-offs: Eastern Conference: New Jersey 5, Montreal 4 (New Jersey lead best-of-seven series 3-0); NY Rangers 4, Florida 3 (ot) (2-1). Western Conference: Chicago 6, Colorado 3 (2-2); St Louis 4, Detroit 0 (2-2); Dallas 4, Edmonton 3 (2-2); Phoenix 2, Anaheim 0 (2-2).

Snooker

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP (Sheffield): First round: A Robidoux (Can) bt B Morgan (Eng) 10-8; J Higgins (Scot) bt G Horne (Scot) 10-6.

Fixtures

(7.30 unless stated)

Soccer

EUROPEAN CUP WINNERS CUP: Semi-finals, second leg: Fiorentina v Barcelona (7.45); Liverpool v Paris St Germain.
FA CARLING PREMIERSHIP: Tottenham v Middlesbrough (7.45).
NATIONWIDE LEAGUE: Second Division: Watford v Chesterfield (7.45).
GM VAUXHALL CONFERENCE: Farnborough v Woking (7.45).
FA YOUTH CHALLENGE CUP: Final, first leg: Leeds v Crystal Palace.
UNIBOND LEAGUE: Premier Division: Boston Utd v Spennymoor; Colwyn Bay v Marine. First Division: Ashton Utd v Matlock Tn. President's Cup: Final, first leg: Runcorn v Blyth Spartans (7.45).
ICIS LEAGUE: Premier Division: Enfield v Dag & Red (7.45); Hitchin v Sutton Utd. Second Division: Chalfont St Peter v Banstead Ath. Full Members Cup: Semi-final replay: Aylesbury Utd v Yeading.
DR MARTENS LEAGUE: Premier Division: Gloucester C v Atherstone.
N-W COUNTIES LEAGUE CUP: Final: Newcastle Tn v Trafford.
SCREWFIX DIRECT LEAGUE: Premier Division: Brislington v Mangotsfield Utd; Bristol MF v Tiverton Tn.
PONTINS LEAGUE: First Division: Leicester v Huddersfield (7.0). Second Division: Grimsby v York (7.0); Mansfield v Burnley (7.0).
FAI NATIONAL LEAGUE: Premier Division: Shamrock Rvrs v Bohemians (7.45).
FA WOMEN'S PREMIER LEAGUE: National Division: Wembley v Southampton.

Rugby Union

WELSH NATIONAL LEAGUE: Second Division: S Wales Police v Llandovery (7.0).

Rugby League

ALLIANCE CHAMPIONSHIP: Castleford v St Helens; Featherstone v Warrington; Halifax v Oldham; Hull v Hull KR. First Division: Batley v Wakefield; Swinton v Dewsbury; York v Leigh. Second Division: Prescot v Rochdale.

● Ben Ainslie maintained his lead in the Laser class at the Semaine Olympique at Hyeres after five races in the gold fleet, writes Bob Fisher. His consistency, with a second and sixth in light and shifting winds yesterday, kept him two points clear of Arne Suneson of Sweden. Another Briton, Shirley Robertson, who was fourth at the Olympic Games, leads the Europe class by four points after six races.

● The double Olympic champion Michael Johnson will have his first race in Britain for three years at the June 29 Grand Prix meeting in Sheffield.

The American, who in Atlanta became the first man to win the 200m and 400m at the same Games, said: "I am still undecided as to whether to compete in the 200m or 400m in [the world championships at] Athens. The race in Sheffield may well point me towards the decision."

Rugby League

Super League: Bradford 28, Halifax 26

Knox makes strong final bid for Bulls with hat-trick of tries

Paul Fitzpatrick

IAN KNOX put himself firmly in line for a Challenge Cup final place a week on Saturday with a hat-trick of tries for Bradford Bulls last night.

The back-row forward was making only his second start of the season, with the Bulls missing seven first-team regulars, and he made the most of his chance. His third try seemed to have given Bradford a reasonably comfortable victory but late touchdowns from Pearson, his second, and Chester threatened their 100-per-cent record.

Kelvin Skerrett lasted barely a minute. He damaged his right arm in his first tackle and left by ambulance for hospital. Ten minutes later Halifax lost Asa Amone, who also seemed to have an arm injury.

The Blue Sox had better luck in the 15th minute when Monroe scored from a blatant forward pass by Wayne Jackson. Pearson landed the goal and they were level.

Halifax had let Bradford in for six points after only three minutes, Tomlinson and Anderson opening a gap which Knox exploited. Halifax's defence opened up too easily again in the 21st minute for Calland to speed over.

Pearson then sprinted clear for Halifax's second try in the 28th minute.

A six-man move on the last tackle brought Bradford another try from Knox soon after the interval. Halifax should have equalised immediately but Rowley spilled the ball, but they got a second chance; poor defence at a scrum allowed Moana to run unhindered to the line.

But two tries in three minutes put the Bulls in a strong position. McNamara was first to Lowes's kick and then Knox got his third.

● Barrow Braves yesterday dismissed their Australian coach Garry Schubert in the wake of the 72-8 defeat by York Wasps on Sunday.

Bradford Bulls: Cook; Ekoku, Calland, Loughlin, Scales, Bradley, Tomlinson, Anderson, Lowes, Reihana, Knox, Dwyer, McNamara. Substitutes: Forshall, Wittenberg, Peacock, Graham.
Halifax Blue Sox: Umaga, Monroe, Pearson, Moana, Amone; Chester, Parker; Harrison, Rowley, Skerrett, M Jackson, Gillespie, Baldwin. Substitutes: Dean, Highton, Bouveng, W. Jackson.
Referee D Campbell (Widnes).

Snooker

Cue doctor gets Higgins home

JOHN HIGGINS, the No. 2 seed, had a quarter of an inch cut from the tip end of his cue mid-match before dispatching his fellow Scot Graham Horne 10-6 to reach the last 16 of the Embassy World Championship, *Clive Everton writes from Sheffield.*

Trailing 3-1 on Tuesday evening, he had the surgery done during the interval and went on to three centuries and victory for the loss of only three further frames.

James Wattana, also playing with a newish cue after breaking his old one in some injudicious horseplay last month, led Graeme Dott 6-3 overnight. Victory would safeguard his top-16 place.

Cricket
News and Scores 0891 22 88 +

Counties update

Derbyshire	31	Kent	37	Somerset	43
Durham	32	Lancs	38	Surrey	44
Essex	33	Leics.	39	Sussex	45
Glamorgan	34	Middlesex	40	Warwicks.	46
Gloucs.	35	Northants.	41	Worcester	47
Hampshire	36	Nottingham	42	Yorkshire	48

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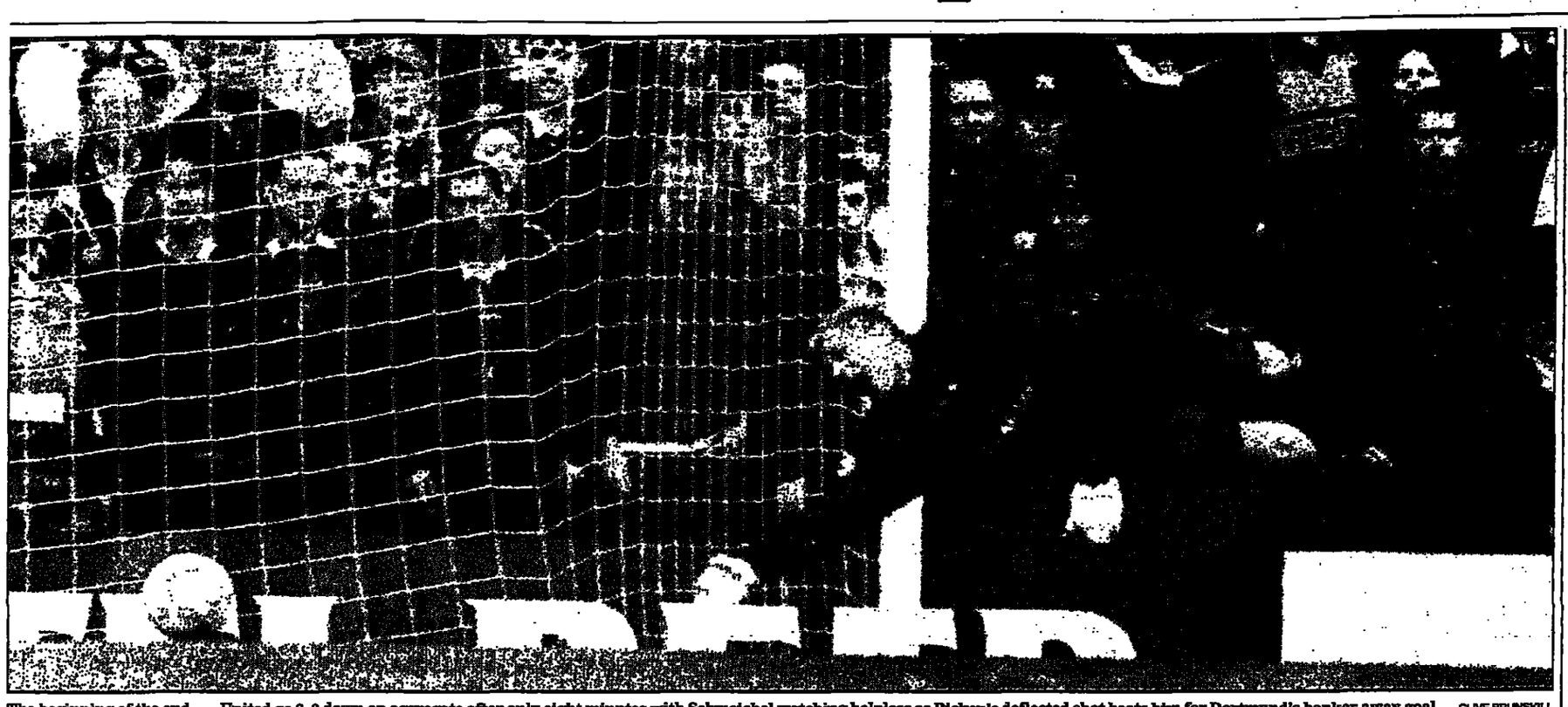
The Guardian INTERACTIVE

Hingis injured in fall from horse, page 14

The relegation dogfights, page 15

SportsGuardian



The beginning of the end . . . United go 2–0 down on aggregate after only eight minutes with Schmeichel watching helpless as Ricken's deflected shot beats him for Dortmund's banker away goal CLIVE BRUNSKILL

Champions League, semi-final, second leg: Manchester United 0, Borussia Dortmund 1 (agg: 0–2)

Ricken wrecks United's dream

David Lacey

MANCHESTER United failed their A level at Old Trafford last night, or else they missed out on finishing school. Either way Borussia Dortmund will play the holders Juventus in this season's Champions League final.

After an early goal by the 20-year-old Lars Ricken had doubled Dortmund's aggregate lead, leaving United to score at least three times to go through, yet another series of missed chances let the English champions down. And even when Klos was beaten, inspired defending by Kohler kept the ball out.

Cup Winners' Cup success notwithstanding, this was English football's biggest night in Europe since Liverpool's appearance in the final of the 1985 European Cup had turned to tragedy at Heysel. To United had fallen the chance to put straight a once-proud English record.

Their task was far from simple, despite the narrowness of Dortmund's win in the Westphalia Stadium a fortnight earlier. The experienced Germans were well versed in the niceties and nuances of mainstream Europe.

Alex Ferguson employed an attacking format similar to that which had overwhelmed Porto in the quarter-finals except that Giggs, United's inspiration then, was on the bench. Cole and Solskjaer were reunited up front, with Cantona in support.

Dortmund had both their main strikers, Riedle and Chapuisat, back after the pair had missed the first leg injured. Kohler, moreover, was restored to their defence.

United's start was predictably brisk and aggressive; Dortmund's response, equally predictably, was more measured. Cole saw a well-struck volley ricochet wide off Kohler and Solskjaer actually had the ball in the net after seven minutes only for the goal to be disallowed for an infringement by May.

Old Trafford roared its encouragement, but soon afterwards United's hopes suffered the blow many had feared. Dortmund's goal was simple enough. Moller's carefully angled low pass from the right caught the defence square and Ricken turned smartly to drive a shot past Schmeichel's right hand, helped by a slight deflection.

Now an ominous calm settled over Dortmund's football as they kept possession and tried to reduce the tempo of the game. At the back the command of Kohler was increasing all the time and already United were badly missing Giggs and Keane.

Yet they should have scored after 17 minutes. Solskjaer found Cole in space on the right and his low centre beat Kros, reaching Cantona at the far post. All it wanted was a tap-in but the Frenchman scuffed his shot, which was blocked by Kohler.

The longer the game progressed the more composed Dortmund's football became. Their defenders were showing a lot of experience under pressure, bringing the ball out comfortably and linking with Moller and Ricken to set up smooth counter-attacks.

Still, United should have kept themselves in the contest with at least one goal before half-time. In the 33rd minute Cole, again playing well, met Beckham's centre with an excellent header which sailed beyond Klos only for the alert Kohler to nod it over the bar.

The half ended with Cole, sent in on the right by Butt, wafting his shot wide when he should have found the target. The moment typified United's evening, a good idea let down by poor execution.

Their aim improved in the second half. In the 52nd minute Klos, rushing out to block Cantona, was beaten by a precise shot. Kohler, needless to say, was on the line to clear it. Klos then did better in keeping out a fierce shot from Cole but it was significant that in the next instant Schmeichel had to deny Moller as Dortmund counter-attacked.

Giggs's groin injury delayed his arrival until the last half-hour, by which time Manchester United were playing for their pride.

Manchester United: Schmeichel; G Neville, May (Scholes, 87min), Pallister, P Neville; Beckham, Johnsen, Butt; Cantona; Cole, Solskjaer (Giggs, 57).

Borussia Dortmund: Klos; Kohler, Feferzinger, Kree; Reuter, Ricken (Zorc, 81), Lambert, Heinrich; Möller; Riedle (Herrlich, 73), Chapuisat.

Referee: U Meier (Switzerland).

Cricket cavalier Compton dies

DENIS COMPTON, English cricket's most enduring and engaging cavalier, died yesterday aged 78. It was not so much the runs he made (and there were tens of thousands) but the manner in which he made them. John Arlott said he was not merely a batsman "but such a natural cricketer that he made the spectator believe there had never been a genuine natural cricketer before".

Compton, who would have been 79 on May 23, played for Middlesex and England from the mid-1930s to the late 1950s. The war smudged what would have been the prime of his twenties. He made up for it afterwards.

He was an all-rounder in every sense, winning caps for England as a dashing winger in wartime soccer internationals and a League championship and FA Cup medal for Arsenal.

At cricket, he scored 38,942 runs with 123 centuries, not one of them laboured or dull, with 17 in his 78 Test matches in which he averaged over 50. "When he could spare the time," as his Middlesex confrere John Warr put it, "he took 622 wickets with experimental left-arm spin," and when he was not signing boundary autographs he held 415 catches.

With a sad but apt timing, his death was announced on the morning the first-class County Championship season began. Many teams stood for a minute's silence, and tributes to him, led by the Prime Minister's, then cascaded in from much further afield.

"There will be a tear in many an eye at the loss of one of the greatest batsmen cricket has ever known," John Major said. "It wasn't just the game he played, it was the way he played it."

Two former England captains spoke of his "genius". Ted Dexter added: "He adorned the game and we should mourn his passing." Brian Close said: "He was a great, natural ball-player and never took things too seriously because, after all, cricket is only a game."

Knee operations ended his football career in 1950 but he hobbled endearingly enough to hit the winning runs for England's triumphant reclaiming of the Ashes in 1953, and even score 278 the following year at Nottingham against Pakistan. His last match for England was in 1956.

G2, cover story; Obituaries, page 9

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Juve wipe floor with Ajax

BORUSSIA Dortmund will meet Juventus in the European Cup final on May 28 after the holders routed Ajax 4–1 in their semi-final second leg in Turin last night.

The Italian champions went through 6–2 on aggregate in what was a rematch between the teams who contested last year's final — which Juve won on penalties.

The visitors somewhat surprisingly dominated the early play in front of a 70,000 crowd at the Delle Alpi stadium, but Juve gradually came back into the match courtesy of the balding Attilio Lombardo.

The deceptively fast winger put Juventus ahead in the 34th minute when he escaped his marker at a corner kick and sent a glancing header past the Dutch international goalkeeper Van der Sar.

Ajax were still drawing their breath when Lombardo streaked down the left touchline and sent over a sharp cross to Vieri, nominally the home side's reserve striker, who extended his left foot to force home his fourth goal in the Champions League.

The Italians — who needed only a draw following their 2–1 first-leg win in Amsterdam two weeks ago — relaxed for long enough to allow the Ajax defender Melchiot to pull a goal back with 15 minutes to go.

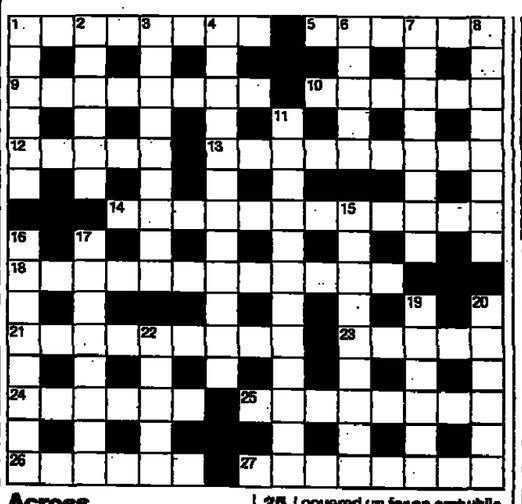
But then Amoruso, a substitute for Vieri, converted a pass from the French international midfielder Zidane in the 80th minute, Zidane getting the fourth himself with eight minutes to go.

But some think it is no longer enough to be talented and inoffensive. Increasingly, the new heroes of sports advertising are not gentlemen but bad boys. Not Compton, but Cantona.
Nick Varley

G2 front

Guardian Crossword No 20,946

Set by Gemini



Across

1 Kiss admitted without acknowledging an affair (8)
5 Imitative of the choice Hobson offered (6)
9 Guide underwater search round the island (8)
10 If objection has weight, one may be pushed for an answer (6)
12 Company held display in the Capital (5)
13 Clear of former partner, a scold (9)
14 Hotel staff serving late drinks (5,7)
18 Gin tipple, say, is drunk with relish (12)
21 Girl restored with plain home-cooking (9)
23 Bore east from port (5)
24 Cash reserves (6)
25 I covered up for an erstwhile partner (8)
26 Drives cattle (6)
27 Partial description of a Möbius strip (3-5)

Down

1 Peep, got by chance, of lady's top (6)
2 Shanty borne by the ocean breeze (3-3)
3 We have his word for it! (9)
4 A quiet production line? (5,7)
6 Slide, or photograph, say (5)
7 Shocked when dismissed by newspaper boss (8)
8 Summarise two studies point by point (8)
11 Making up poem in cantos perhaps (12)
15 Family accounts (9)
16 Vessel plumbing with sounding instrument (3-5)
17 Tied up at work acquiring the know-how (8)
19 Darling daughter has added elegance (6)
20 Was first to cover the news story (6)
22 Communist party rising is more unusual (5)

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